

Minutes
Catawba County Board of Commissioners
Regular Session, Monday, April 21, 2003, 7:00 p.m.

Bids

Bids #03-1008 - Oxford Fire/EMS/Rescue Base 832 04/21/03

Catawba Valley Community College

No. 2003-11, Realignment of Catawba Valley Boulevard 830 04/21/03

Codification of County Laws

Amendment to the Catawba County Subdivision Ordinance, Chapter 36,
Article II, Section 36-36 (e) (3) a. and b. Time limits on approval
of preliminary major plats 825 04/21/03

Amendment to Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2, Section 2.118, Authority to
Contract 829 04/21/03

Emergency Services

Resolution - Designation of Catawba County's Agent for Matters Involving
Federal Disaster Assistance 829 04/21/03

Bids #03-1008 - Oxford Fire/EMS/Rescue Base 832 04/21/03

Facilities

Bids #03-1008 - Oxford Fire/EMS/Rescue Base 832 04/21/03

Finance Department

Bids #03-1008 - Oxford Fire/EMS/Rescue Base 832 04/21/03

Grants

FY 2004 Catawba County Rural Operating Assistance Program
Grant Application 827 04/21/03

Guests

Robert Braswell, Hickory Public Schools Board of Education Member 827 04/21/03

Members from the media 827 04/21/03

Paul Teague, Hickory Plumbing and Heating 827 04/21/03

Hickory, City of

Joint Resolution for Realignment of Catawba Valley Boulevard 830 04/21/03

Historical Association, Catawba County

Waiver of Solid Waste Disposal Fees for Catawba County Historical
Association for Murray's Mill Annual Storytelling Festival on May 2, 2003 831 04/21/03

Murray's Mill

Waiver of Solid Waste Disposal Fees for Catawba County Historical
Association for Murray's Mill Annual Storytelling Festival on May 2, 2003 831 04/21/03

NCDOT

NCDOT Secondary Construction Paving Priority 795 04/21/03

Ordinances

2003-07 Amendment to Code of Ordinances, Chapter 36, Article II,
Section 36-36 (e) (3) a. and b. 825 04/21/03

2003-08 Amendment to Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2, Section 2.118,
Authority to Contract 829 04/21/03

Oxford Fire Department

Bids #03-1008 - Oxford Fire Department, Station No. 2(EMS & Rescue) 832 04/21/03

Planning

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St. Stephens/Oxford Small Area Plan	796	04/21/03
Realignment of Catawba Valley Boulevard	830	04/21/03

Proclamations

National Public Safety Communications Week	795	04/21/03
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Public hearings

Rezoning request of John Wayne Foster and Gaynell Y. Foster to rezone a 3.636 acre portion of an existing 16.89 acre tract from R-2 Residential to C-1 Commercial (Denied)	796	04/21/03
St. Stephens/Oxford Small Area Plan	796	04/21/03
Amendment to the Catawba County Subdivision Ordinance, Chapter 36, Article II, Section 36-36 (e) (3) a. and b. Time limits on approval of preliminary major plats	825	04/21/03
FY 2004 Catawba County Rural Operating Assistance Program Grant Application	827	04/21/03

Resolutions

No. 2003-09, Opposing the Passage of Senate Bill 322 Regarding Mandatory Provision of Interconnection and Provision of Potable Water Between Governmental Agencies	827	04/21/03
No. 2003-10, Designation of Catawba County's Agent for Matters Involving Federal Disaster Assistance	829	04/21/03
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Small Area Plans

St. Stephens/Oxford Small Area Plan	796	04/21/03
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Social Services

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Transit

FY 2004 Catawba County Rural Operating Assistance Program Grant Application	827	04/21/03
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Utilities and Engineering

Resolution Opposing the Passage of Senate Bill 322 Regarding Mandatory Provision of Interconnection and Provision of Potable Water Between Governmental Agencies	827	04/21/03
Waiver of Solid Waste Disposal Fees for Catawba County Historical Association for Murray's Mill Annual Storytelling Festival on May 2, 2003	831	04/21/03
Litter Sweep Weeks	835	04/21/03

The Catawba County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, April 21, 2003, 7:00 p.m., at the 1924 Courthouse, Robert E. Hibbitts Meeting Room, 30 North College Avenue, Newton, North Carolina.

Present were Chair Katherine W. Barnes, Vice Chairman Dan A. Hunsucker, Commissioners Glenn E. Barger, Barbara G. Beatty, and Lynn M. Lail.

Absent: None.

A quorum was present.

Also present were County Manager/Deputy Clerk J. Thomas Lundy, Deputy County Manager Steven D. Wyatt, Assistant County Manager Mick W. Berry, County Attorney Robert Oren Eades, Staff Attorney Debra Bechtel, and County Clerk Thelda B. Rhoney.

1. Chair Barnes called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.
2. Invocation offered by Commissioner Lail. Commissioner Beatty led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
3. Commissioner Barger made a motion to approve the minutes from the regular session of Monday, April 7, 2003. The motion carried unanimously.
4. Presentations:
 - a. Chair Barnes presented a National Public Safety Communications Week Proclamation for April 13-19, 2003, to Mark D. Wireman, Shift Supervisor, Communications Center.

Mr. Wireman thanked the Board for the Proclamation.

- b. North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Secondary Construction Paving Priority.

Mr. Clay Lunsford, NC Department of Transportation District Engineer, District 2, Division 12 introduced his assistant Timothy Anderson, and Doug McNeal, Catawba County Maintenance Engineer. Mr. Lunsford presented the 2003-2004 Secondary Roads Improvement Plan for Catawba County, as determined by the North Carolina Board of Transportation. County governments in North Carolina do not pave or maintain roads. The program is subject to availability of funds, right-of-way, and environmental review. NCDOT will continue down the following priority list until all funds are exhausted.

Catawba County 2003-2004 Paving Priority
Fiscal Year 7/1/03 to 6/30/04

Paving Priority	SR#	Description	Length (miles)	Est. Cost
Rural				
5F	1520	Claude Rd. from SR1453 to end of maint.	0.60	\$132,000
6F	1830	Moose Rd. from SR1004 to end of maint.	0.78	174,000
7F	1142	Cauble Dairy Rd. from SR1008 to end of maint.	<u>0.63</u>	<u>141,000</u>
		Rural total	2.01	447,000
Subdivision Streets				
11	1309M	6th Ave. NW from existing pavement to SR1311	0.22	\$46,000
12	2677	Sylvan Dr. from SR1841 to dead end	0.17	36,000
13	1171	6th St. Ct. from existing pavement to end of maint.	0.29	60,000
14	2121	Hass Dr. from SR1005 to end of maint.	0.21	44,000
15	2529	1st St Ct. SE from SR1173 to 1173 Loop	0.18	38,000
16	1897	Hendrix Rd. from SR1810 to dead end	0.20	42,000
17	2599	Joseph Ct. from SR1193 to dead end	<u>0.15</u>	<u>32,000</u>
		Subdivision total	1.42	298,000
GRAND TOTAL			3.43	\$745,000
Various spot stabilization, secondary maintenance				\$ 124,516
Total secondary construction program				745,000

Reserved for contingencies	187,459
Total Allocation	<u>\$1,056,975</u>

After a brief discussion, Commissioner Hunsucker made a motion to accept the aforementioned NCDOT paving priority. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Public hearings:

- a. Rezoning request of John Wayne Foster and Gaynell Y. Foster to rezone a 3.636 acre portion of an existing 16.89 acre tract from R-2 Residential to C-1 Commercial. This property is located in the Mountain Creek Township on Slanting Bridge Road in Denver, NC, further identified as parcel 4606-04-62-4468.

Assistant Planner Richard B. Smith said the applicants are requesting to rezone an approximately 3.636 acre portion of an existing 16.89 acre tract from R-2 Residential to C-1 Commercial. This property lies within the Sherrills Ford Small Area Planning District.

The C-1 Commercial District is designed, like the rural commercial nodes, to serve the residents neighborhood. This designation is designed to accommodate commercial uses that have less of an impact on their surrounding neighborhood. There are other commercially zoned tracts and commercial uses in close proximity to this property. The Duke Power utility line right-of-way can serve as an increased buffer between this property and its abutting residential properties.

Mr. Smith said at the Planning Board's public hearing the members voted 7 to 1 to deny the request to rezone the property from R-2 Residential to C-1 Commercial due to public opposition to the rezoning. He said the request would fit into the established character of the area and based on that information, staff recommended the approval of the rezoning from R-2 Residential to C-1 Commercial.

Chair Barnes requested that County Attorney Robert Oren Eades make recommendation about the request.

Mr. Eades said in February 2003 the Board adopted the Sherrills Ford Small Area Plan and the Board denied a commercial rezoning request in February 2003. To be consistent he recommended that the Board deny the proposed rezoning.

Chair Barnes opened the public hearing by saying this was the time and place as advertised for the public hearing and asked if anyone wished to speak either for or against.

James Hall, 225 Independence Lane, Denver, NC, spoke in opposition to the rezoning.

Billy Watts, Slanting Bridge Road, spoke in opposition of the rezoning and he said Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Garrison couldn't attend the meeting but requested that Mr. Watts speak in opposition for them as well.

Robert Groshon, 275 Independence Lane, Denver, NC, spoke in opposition to the rezoning.

There being no one else wishing to speak, Chair Barnes closed the public hearing.

After a brief discussion, Commissioner Barger made a motion to denied the rezoning request of John W. Foster and Gaynell Y. Foster to rezone a 3.636 acre portion of an existing 16.89 acre tract, located on Slanting Bridge Road in the Mountain Creek Township, from R-2 Residential to C-1 Commercial and allow the applicants to reapply after the zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinance are amended. The applicants will not be charged additional fees to reapply. The motion carried unanimously.

- b. St. Stephens/Oxford Small Area Plan.

Ms. Anne Barrier, Chair, St. Stephens/Oxford Small Area Plan Committee gave the following PowerPoint presentation:

Ms. Barrier introduced the following committee members:

Larry Brittain
Ira Cline
John Cline
Clifford D. Isaac
Jeff Kerley
Todd Miller
John Robinson
Mack Stafford
Mike Williams

St. Stephens/Oxford SAP Process

- Ten committee members appointed by Board of Commissioners in late 2000
- Met monthly for past two years
- Obtained citizen input through community meeting held in May 2001 attended by 17 citizens
- Community Input Meeting Community issues:
 - Preservation of rural character/farmland
 - Lack of public water/ sewer
 - Rapid housing on small lots
 - Lack of long-range planning
- Residential Density Recommendations
- High density:
 - Western half of area
 - 2 houses per acre w/o water
 - 3 houses per acre w/ water
 - 5% open space
- Medium density:
 - South-central portion
 - .75-acre lot size
 - 7.5% open space
- Low density:
 - Eastern portion
 - 1-acre lot size
 - 10% open space
- Residential Density Recommendations
- Catawba River corridor:
 - Corridor is 435 feet deep
 - 1 house per acre
 - 100 foot lot width
 - Cluster development allowed with lots no less than .75 acre in size
- Commercial/Mixed Use Recommendation
- Mixed uses (commercial, multi-family, office-institutional) south of St. Johns Church Road
- Neighborhood Commercial/office-institutional southeast of Rock Barn Road
- Office/institutional at Hwy. 16/C&B Farm Road intersection
- Commercial/Mixed Use Recommendations
- Rural commercial at crossroads, ex. Hwy. 16/Swinging Bridge Road
- Neighborhood commercial at Springs Rd./ St. Peters Church Road intersection
- Commercial corridor along Springs Road with design standards
- Community center at I-40/Oxford School Road interchange

Industrial Recommendations

- South of I-40 between planning jurisdiction of Conover and Claremont
- I-40 interchange at Oxford School Road

Residential Rezoning

- Proactive rezoning of 64% of district:
 - 63% proposed R-1 (no manufactured homes)

- 1% proposed R-3 (doublewides and stick-built homes – no singlewides)

Transportation Recommendations

- Address dangerous roads and intersections such as Hwy. 16/St. Johns Church Road
- Widen roads for bicyclists
- 4-lane divided landscaped sections for widening of Hwy. 16 and Springs Road
- Scenic highway designation for Riverbend Road
- Sidewalks, or comparable pedestrian/bike path, for developments of at least 25 lots of ½ acre or less in size.

Community Facilities & Public Services Recommendations

- Multi-jurisdictional greenway along Catawba River beginning at Riverbend Park
- Focus utility expansions in high-density areas
- Community-based schools to be used for public recreation activities

Natural Resources Recommendations

- Develop design standards for recreational facilities along the lakes and rivers to protect water quality and scenic beauty
- Trail connection between Oxford access and Riverbend Park
- Encourage preservation of Natural Heritage Inventory sites

Public Review of Draft Plan

- Forty (40) citizens attended community meeting in September 2002 to review draft plan
- Comments received:
- Realistic planning tool
- Review R-1 zoning for existing mobile home parks
- Well-balanced plan

Planning Board Review

- Conducted joint work session with Committee on March 17, 2003
- Planning Board public hearing held on March 31, 2003
- Five people spoke
- Issue of replacement of singlewide with doublewide home in proposed R-1 zoning areas
- Planning Board recommendation with additional designation of scenic highway along Oxford School Road

Post-Planning Board Discussion

- Plan recommends requiring replacement of singlewide with a doublewide in the proposed R-1 zoning area
- Due to concerns expressed by several citizens, this recommendation has been revised by the committee to allow replacement with another singlewide manufactured home

Chair Barnes thanked Ms. Barrier and the committee.

Chair Barnes opened the public hearing by saying this was the time and place as advertised for the public hearing and asked if anyone wished to speak either for or against.

Mr. Tracy Warlick said he liked the plan as it allows for resources for higher density where water and possibly sewer lines are located. He said this plan would make a very good model plan by allowing reasonable use of county resources..

There being no one else wishing to speak, Chair Barnes closed the public hearing.

County Attorney Robert Oren Eades said it was recommended that the area between Rest Home Road, Riverbend Road and Oxford School remain R-2 even though the property south of these areas is currently R-1 and the surrounding property is proposed to be zoned R-1. He recommended that that property also be zoned R-1 as it would be inconsistent if left R-2. The plan asks that Riverbend Road be designated as a scenic highway and R-1 would be more consistent for a scenic highway. The area is in the low density which is consistent with R-1. He recommended the plan be adopted with changes mentioned for R-1 zoning.

The Commissioners commended the members who worked on the plan.

After a lengthy discussion, Commissioner Beatty made a motion to adopt the following St. Stephens/Oxford Small Area plan with the recommended changes proposed by County Attorney Eades. The motion carried unanimously.

St. Stephens/Oxford Small Area Plan

Recommended by the St. Stephens/Oxford SAP Committee October 30, 2002

Recommended by the Catawba County Planning Board March 31, 2003

Adopted by the Catawba County Board of Commissioners April 21, 2003

Plan Participants

Catawba County Board Of Commissioners

Kitty W. Barnes, *Chair*

Dan A. Hunsucker, *Vice-Chair*

Glenn E. Barger

Barbara G. Beatty

Lynn M. Lail

St. Stephens/Oxford Small Area Plan Committee

Anne Barrier, *Chair & Planning Board Liaison*

Larry Brittain

Ira Cline

John Cline

Clifford D. Isaac

Jeff Kerley

Todd Miller

John Robinson

Mack Stafford

Mike Williams

Catawba County Planning Board

Ray Von Caldwell, *Chair*

Steve Von Drehle, *Vice Chair*

Anne B. Barrier

Paul A. Beatty, Jr.

Charles F. Connor, III

Aaron King

William "Rusty" Lutz

Michael C. Miller

Edward C. Neill

Clifford D. Isaac, *alternate*

Debbie Pitts, *alternate*

Dr. Eric Shook, *alternate*

Catawba County Planning Staff

Jacky Eubanks, Director of Planning and Community Development

Mary George, County Planner

Rich Hoffman, Assistant County Planner

Richard Smith, Assistant County Planner

Other Participants, Special Thanks

Tom Carr, Executive Assistant, City of Hickory

Keith Stahley, Planning Director, City of Hickory

Sidney Halma, Catawba County Historical Association

Randy Williams, Director of Planning & Economic Development, City of Conover

*Technical Assistance Provided By:
Western Piedmont Council of Governments*

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Purpose

The concept of conducting small area plans for Catawba County was one of sixteen growth strategies resulting from the County's long-range Strategic Growth Plan (1999). The Growth Plan stated that Small Area Plans "would explore general development patterns and trends and evaluate public service/facility deficiencies needing attention." The document further stated that the plans should also "include conceptual sketch plans based upon appropriate land use and zoning concepts and be used for consideration for future zoning changes and subdivision standards."

Through the development of the small area plan, a committee would assess their area's current quality of life and sustainability on issues such as traffic congestion, residential development patterns, water quality, library service levels, utility capacities and school facilities. Upon reviewing these issues, the committee then would recommend measures for improvement. Specifically, the Small Area Planning Committee was asked to discuss and develop goals and action statements for the following issues: 1) economic development; 2) natural resources; 3) cultural resources; 4) community facilities and public services; 5) housing; 6) land use and community design; and 7) transportation. The plan would then include implementation strategies for the goals and action statements, whether it is through ordinance or policy amendments, modified capital improvement plans, or coordination with other agencies to complete specific tasks.

Process

The process for developing the small area plan was a grassroots effort that began with the appointment of the St. Stephens/Oxford Small Area Planning Committee in October 2000 by the Board of Commissioners. Ten committee members were interested citizens who live or own land in the St. Stephens/Oxford Small Area Plan boundary and volunteered their time to develop a small area plan for their community. One committee member was also a Planning Board member who served as liaison to the Board. The County Planning staff and the Western Piedmont Council of Governments educated and assisted the Committee in the development of their individual plan. During the process of developing the plan, the Committee solicited input from citizens in the planning area through a community input meeting held in May 2001. At this meeting, citizens were asked how they saw their community developing in the future using a 10 to 20 year planning period. Approximately twenty residents participated in this meeting held at Riverbend Middle School. Results from this community input meeting are provided in Appendix A. The Committee used this input in the development of the plan's guiding principles and recommendations. Upon completion of the draft plan, the Committee sponsored another public meeting in September 2002, which was held at Lyle Creek Elementary School. At this meeting, the plan's maps and recommendations were presented to the community. The Committee, in amending the draft plan, considered input from the 40 residents who participated at this meeting. When the Committee's recommendations were complete, their final document was presented to the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners for review and consideration for adoption. Presentations to these Boards were through a public hearing process where the public was invited to express its comments on the proposed plan. The committee presented the final document to the Planning Board at a work session held on March 17, 2003. The Planning Board conducted a public hearing on the plan at its March 31, 2003 meeting and subsequently recommended the plan to the Board of Commissioners with an amendment to add a Scenic Byway designation along Oxford School Road. The Board of Commissioners reviewed the plan during one-on-one sessions with the committee in February 2003. The

Board of Commissioners then conducted its public hearing and adopted the plan at its April 21, 2003 meeting. In adopting the plan, the Board amended a recommendation in order to allow an existing singlewide manufactured home to be switched out with another singlewide manufactured home in the R-1 rezoning areas. The Board also amended Map 8, *Proposed Zoning Map Amendments* to include the Rest Home Road/Riverbend Road area in the proposed R-1 zoning.

Over the next five years issues may arise that have not been addressed in this document. Since the plan is intended to be an active document, it must be capable of adapting to changes and new challenges. The St. Stephens/Oxford SAP Committee recommends reviewing the plan every five years, or as conditions change. Amendments to the Plan have a potential impact on all residents and businesses in the St. Stephens/Oxford area and therefore should be treated in a manner that would allow for public input, through notice and hearings, during the amendment procedure.

STUDY AREA

The St. Stephens/Oxford Small Area Plan (SAP) study area boundary follows the Catawba River to the north and east; the municipal limits of Catawba, Claremont and Conover to the south; and the municipal limits of Hickory to the west. The study area encompasses approximately 30,846 acres.

See Map 1, *St. Stephens/Oxford SAP Study Area*

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The St. Stephens/Oxford Area has historically been a rural farming community since its settlement in the 18th century. The farming culture of this community is still apparent today. Although the area is much more suburban today, many residents identify with the farming culture. The "Rock Barn" located off Rock Barn Road near Lyle Creek is identified on the National Register of Historic Places. The barn (circa 1822) was part of the farm of Frederick Hoke, who was instrumental in the formation of Catawba County in 1842. This barn is a symbol of the agricultural history of the community. Churches have also played an important role in the history of the St. Stephens/Oxford Area. The St. Stephens community derived its name from the two Lutheran churches located on Springs Road. These and many other churches have bonded the community and formed a significant part of its identity.

The Catawba River has also played a significant role in the history of the area. The construction of the Oxford and Lookout Dams in the early 20th century provided needed electricity for the area and controlled flooding that destroyed homes and farms. The river is also used for recreation and fishing.

Today, the St. Stephens/Oxford Area is much more suburban than rural. Although there are several farms remaining, the number of farms has diminished greatly through the years. Like many other communities in close proximity to growing urban areas, the St. Stephens/Oxford area faces many growth pressures. The impacts of sprawling growth are clearly evident as pastures, forested areas and farmland are developed.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

ASSETS AND KEY ISSUES

During the May 2001 community meeting, St. Stephens/Oxford residents participated in small group discussions to identify their likes, dislikes and future visions of the community. As a result of the discussions, the committee identified broad categories of assets and key issues to direct their work. In the following sections of the plan, more specific comments from the community meeting comprise the guiding principles of each topic.

Community Assets

- Rural setting
 - Un-congested
 - Open space
 - Scenic topography
 - Public services
 - Schools
 - Fire Departments

Key Issues

- Rapid residential development on small lots.
- Loss of farmland and open space.
- Need for public water.

MAJOR POINTS OF REFERENCE

The St. Stephens/Oxford SAP encompasses approximately 30,846 acres of land in northern Catawba County. A significant natural feature bordering the study area is the Catawba River. Other significant natural features include Riverbend Park, a 450-acre park adjoining the Catawba River, and a number of streams and scenic vistas.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The St. Stephens/Oxford area experienced a substantial population growth from 1990 to 2000. The number of people residing in the area grew at a rate of 33.8%. The population in 1990 for the area was 14,669 while the 2000 Census indicated a population of 19,625, an increase of 4,956 persons (see chart below). The growth rate for the entire county was 19.7%, considerably less than the growth rate of the study area. The study area's net gain of 4,956 persons represented 21% of the total County population increase of 23,273. The population growth rate for the study area is among the highest in the Unifour.

St. Stephens/Oxford Small Area Plan, Study Area Growth: 1990 to 2000				
Year	1990	2000	Net Change	% Change
Persons	14,669	19,625	4,956	33.8
Households	5,465	7,481	2,016	36.9
Persons/Household	2.68	2.62	-0.06	-2.2

Source: US Census, 1990, and 2000; compiled by WPCOG Data Center, May 2002.

The number of households grew slightly faster than the number of persons in the study area, resulting in a lower average of persons per household. This trend is consistent with county, state and national trends, all indicating a lower number of persons per household.

Catawba County Population Growth: 1990 to 2000				
Year	1990	2000	Net Change	% Change
Persons	118,412	141,685	23,273	19.7
Households	45,700	55,533	9,833	21.5
Persons/Household	2.59	2.55	-0.04	-1.5

Source: US Census, 1990, and 2000; Catawba County GIS, 2000; as compiled by WPCOG Data Center, May 2002.

The St. Stephens/Oxford study area is comprised of portions of Census Tracts 101.01, 102.01, 102.02 and 103.01. See Map 2, *St. Stephens/Oxford SAP Census Tracts*. The remaining demographic information is broken down by the St. Stephens/Oxford SAP, Census Tracts 101.01, 102.01, 102.02, 103.01 and Catawba County.

The population in the study area as well as Catawba County is predominately white.

Race and Ethnicity, 2000				
Place	White	Black	Other	Hispanic (any race)
St. Stephens/Oxford SAP	90.5%	2.9%	6.6%	5.0%
Census Tract 101.01	93.7%	2.5%	3.8%	1.2%
Census Tract 102.01	86.5%	3.4%	10.1%	4.6%
Census Tract 102.02	84.4%	8.3%	7.3%	7.5%
Census Tract 103.01	91.5%	2.7%	5.8%	8.7%
Catawba County	85.0%	8.4%	6.6%	5.6%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000; WPCOG Data Center 2002.

Residents ranging in age from 19 to 64 comprise the largest population group of residents in the study area, Census Tracts 101.01, 102.01, 102.02, 103.01 and Catawba County.

Age of Population, 2000			
Place	Persons Age 18 and under (% of all persons)	Persons Age 19 to 64 (% of all persons)	Persons Age 65 and older (% of all persons)
St. Stephens/Oxford SAP	5,219 (26.6%)	12,718 (64.8%)	1,688 (8.6%)
Census Tract 101.01	1,345 (24.8%)	3,624 (66.6%)	465 (8.6%)
Census Tract 102.01	1,241 (28.0%)	2,875 (64.8%)	320 (7.2%)
Census Tract 102.02	1,701 (25.3%)	4,246 (63.2%)	770 (11.5%)
Census Tract 103.01	1,202 (27.4%)	2,839 (64.8%)	344 (7.8%)
Catawba County	34,392 (24.3%)	89,868 (63.4%)	17,425 (12.3%)

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000; WPCOG Data Center 2002.

Between 1985 and 1990 61.4% of St. Stephens/Oxford residents remained in the same home compared to 55.1% in Catawba County. However, during that same time period, St. Stephens/Oxford experienced 13.6% in-migration, which is comparable to the 16.1% experienced by Catawba County.

Change in Housing and Migration		
Place	% of Persons living in the same house between 1985 and 1990	In-migration 1985 and 1990 (% of population)
St. Stephens/Oxford SAP	61.4%	1,995 (13.6%)
Census Tract 101	59.8%	860 (13.2%)
Census Tract 102	66.8%	786 (9.8%)
Census Tract 103	57.8%	2,232 (17.3%)
Catawba County	55.1%	19,027 (16.1%)

Note: In migration refers to those persons that moved into the listed place from another MSA between 1985 and 1990. All of the places listed in the table are part of the Hickory MSA.

Source: US Census Bureau, 1990.

In 1990 the average commute time to work for St. Stephens/Oxford residents was 17.5 minutes, which is below the County average of 21.6 minutes.

Commuting Time to Work, 1990		
Place	Average Work Commute Time	% of Workers commuting over 40 minutes to work
St. Stephens/Oxford SAP	17.5 minutes	4.3%
Census Tract 101	18.2 minutes	4.7%
Census Tract 102	17.2 minutes	4.6%
Census Tract 103	17.2 minutes	3.8%
Catawba County	21.6 minutes	12.2%

Source: US Census Bureau, 1990.

St. Stephens/Oxford had a lower percentage of workers employed outside of Catawba County than the County as a whole.

Place of Work, 1990	
Place	% of Workers Employed Outside County of Residence
St. Stephens/Oxford SAP	7.8%
Census Tract 101	8.7%
Census Tract 102	6.0%
Census Tract 103	8.7%
Catawba County	11.9%
Hickory-Morganton MSA	21.4%

Source: US Census Bureau, 1990.

In 1990 17.3% of St. Stephens/Oxford residents were employed in professional occupations compared to 17.6% in Catawba County. Employment in service and professional support occupations showed a greater difference between St. Stephens/Oxford (31.3%) and Catawba County (35.6%). Catawba County as a whole had more workers employed in manufacturing occupations. Farming occupations, near 1%, were low for both St. Stephens/Oxford and Catawba County.

Employment, 1990				
Place	% Employed in Professions	% Employed in Service & Prof. Support	% Employed in Manufacturing	% Employed in Farming
St. Stephens/Oxford SAP	17.3%	31.3%	50.5%	0.9%
Census Tract 101	18.4%	32.6%	48.2%	0.8%
Census Tract 102	15.6%	34.1%	48.8%	1.5%
Census Tract 103	18.5%	27.9%	53.1%	0.5%
Catawba County	17.6%	35.6%	45.8%	1.0%

Source: US Census Bureau, 1990.

Household income data from 1989 indicates a slightly higher median household income in St. Stephens/Oxford compared to Catawba County though Catawba County showed a higher percentage of household incomes over \$60,000.

Household Income, 1989			
Place	1989 Estimated Median Household Income	% of 1989 Households with Incomes Below \$10,000	% of 1989 Household Incomes over \$60,000
St. Stephens/Oxford SAP	\$32,189	7.6%	11.8%
Census Tract 101	\$34,655	8.5%	9.4%
Census Tract 102	\$30,565	6.1%	9.8%
Census Tract 103	\$31,994	8.4%	15.2%
Catawba County	\$31,212	13.0%	15.7%

Source: US Census Bureau, 1990.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROJECTIONS

If the long-term trend of increasing job demand continues in Catawba County, the population in the St. Stephens/Oxford area is projected to continue increasing at a substantial rate. By 2015 the population of the St. Stephens/Oxford area could approach 27,000 persons. The trend of fewer people per household is expected to continue.

St. Stephens/Oxford Small Area Plan, Projected Study Area Growth: 2000 to 2015						
Year	2000	2005	2010	2015	Growth 2000 to 2015	% Change
Persons	19,625	22,431	24,685	26,677	7,052	35.9
Households	7,481	8,627	9,568	10,421	2,940	39.3
Persons/Household	2.62	2.60	2.58	2.56	-0.06	-2.3

Source: WPCOG Data Center, May 2002.

This substantial population growth for the St. Stephens/Oxford area is predicated on growth rates that are more than 35% for the area. Future population growth within the St. Stephens/Oxford Area Plan boundary will be largely affected by the availability of public water and sewer and the County subdivision policy restricting development in school districts at or near 110% of their school capacity. If current subdivision policies remain in place, population growth will be limited in part by pre-existing or potential small lot development. However, if County policies on school capacities change, or if multi-family or new residential subdivision growth is stimulated by the extension of water or sewer services, the potential growth will increase significantly. These population projections would then need to be revised or updated extensively.

LAND USE AND COMMUNITY DESIGNCURRENT CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

Current Land Use

Residential uses and open space occupy a majority of the land in the St. Stephens/Oxford study area. Most parcels are zoned R-1, R-2 and R-3 with a majority of the area assigned the R-2 zoning classification as indicated on Map 3, *St. Stephens/Oxford SAP Current Zoning*. The R-2 zoning district is intended to accommodate low-density residential development, agriculture, and the necessary governmental and support services in the more rural portions of the County. It permits modular, site-built homes, singlewide and doublewide manufactured homes, as well as bona fide farms. Large tracts of undeveloped land, zoned R-2, remain along Lookout Shoals Lake. This portion of the study area is much less densely developed and still retains a rural atmosphere. The western and southern sections of the study area contain a greater density of housing as indicated on Map 4, *St. Stephens/Oxford SAP Current Land Uses*.

Most of the commercial activity is concentrated along Springs Road from the western study area boundary to County Home Road. Additional commercial activity is sparsely located along the remainder of Springs Road, on NC Highway 16 and on the northern side of the I-40 interchange at Oxford School Road. The commercial areas are primarily zoned C-2, which allows regional type businesses. Fewer commercial parcels are zoned C-1, which permits community service type businesses. The few parcels zoned C-3, previously non-conforming businesses, are not allowed to expand their land use (see Map 3).

Industrial and office-institutional uses within the study area are limited (see Map 4). Claremont, Conover, and Hickory contain large industrial parks with the needed infrastructure. While most of the industry is located within municipalities, some industrial uses are sparsely located within the St. Stephens/Oxford Study Area. A welding operation and two furniture manufacturers, zoned E-1, are located on Houston Mill Road. Volex, a textiles manufacturer, is also zoned E-1 and is located on Bolick Road. The location of a salvage yard on NC Highway 16 is zoned E-2. A beauty shop occupies the property zoned O-I on Springs Road.

State mandated watershed regulations also impact land uses in the St. Stephens/Oxford Study Area. The study area lies within the Lookout Shoals WS-IV watershed. The watershed extends five miles from the Lake, with the first half-mile designated as the critical area. This watershed was designated in 1999 as a water intake for the City of Statesville.

Land Use Distribution

The St. Stephens/Oxford SAP encompasses 30,846 acres of land (excluding rights-of-way). Of the 30,846 acres, roughly 28% are entirely vacant and another 49% are in large tracts, which could be subdivided.

	Total Zoned Acreage		
	Total Acreage	Total Entirely Vacant Land	% Entirely Vacant
St. Stephens/Oxford	30,846	8,519	28%

Land use in the study area consists of industrial, commercial, office-institutional and residential uses. Commercial zoning occupies the largest number of acres of non-residential zoned land, though industrial zoned land has the greatest vacancy rate.

	Acreage Zoned Non-Residential		
	Total Acreage	Total Entirely Vacant Land	% Vacant Zoned Non-Residential
Industrial	40	12	30%
Commercial	183	26	14%
Office-Institutional	1	0	0%

Residential uses occupy the greatest percentage of land in the study area (see Map 4). Yet over 65% of the residentially zoned land is vacant as shown on Map 3. Over 14,445 acres are entirely vacant while approximately 10,967 acres with a structure are in lots of four acres or more that could be subdivided into two lots. Assuming that 85% of the total vacant land zoned for residential use is developed, the St. Stephens/Oxford area could see an additional 16,940 acres developed for residential purposes.

	Acreage Zoned Residential		
	Total Acreage	Total Entirely Vacant Land + Lots w/Structure & ≥ 4 Acres	% Vacant Zoned Residential
St. Stephens/Oxford	30,622	19,929	65%

The land use statistics indicate that a substantial amount of additional development could occur in the St. Stephens/Oxford area.

Site Development Patterns and Land Design Trends

Historically, St. Stephens/Oxford was largely a rural agricultural community. Gradually, the larger homesteads were sold and subdivided for single-family homes. Housing developments began to take over open space that residents value. While the greatest amount of residential growth has occurred in the western and southern portion of the study area, growth pressures are developing for the northeastern portion of the study area. Manufactured home developments have been more common in the northeast section of the study area. Site built homes represent a majority of residential growth in the southern and western sections of the study area. A significant amount of low-density development could occur within the study area.

Commercial uses have developed primarily along Springs Road, NC Highway 16 and at several major intersections in the study area. Most St. Stephens/Oxford residents work and shop in the Claremont, Conover and Hickory urban areas. This trend is not expected to change as retail developers target more densely populated areas, such as Hickory and Conover. The construction of the new NC 16 interchange on Interstate 40 along with significant residential development, will likely lead to significant commercial development just south of the study area. Commercial development along the Highway 16 Corridor, within Conover, will likely consider much of the study area as part of its sales market. Aside from that, significant commercial development is not expected within the study area.

Industrial growth within the study area has been limited and most current industrial uses were in existence prior to countywide zoning. Most industrial development has occurred within Claremont, Conover and Hickory. Industrial growth in the urbanized areas, where the needed infrastructure is located, is expected to continue. Significant industrial growth, within the study area, is not anticipated.

The County owns and operates Riverbend Park located on N.C. Highway 16 at the Catawba River. This 450-acre park includes a variety of passive recreational opportunities including walking, hiking, biking and equestrian trails, picnic areas and an observation deck by the river. The Catawba River (Lake Hickory and Lake Lookout Shoals) borders the study area to the north and east. The river and lakes also provide recreational opportunities. Other recreational uses in the St. Stephens/Oxford Area consist primarily of school and church facilities.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

RESIDENTIAL

- Maintain a rural, un-congested setting.
- Provide a regional fair-share of affordable housing.
- Encourage subdivisions to build community atmosphere and a sense of place through design.
- Discourage the accumulation of unnecessary materials/vehicles in residential areas, on public rights-of-way and near the river.

COMMERCIAL

- Continue to allow a diversified range of businesses.
- Require more aesthetically pleasing commercial development designs.
- Balance additional growth in commercial services with the preservation of rural atmosphere.

OFFICE-INSTITUTIONAL

- Maintain a scale and design for office-institutional buildings that blend with the surrounding area.
- Encourage Office-Institutional growth.

INDUSTRIAL

- Control industrial growth in restricted zones.

OPEN SPACE

- Protect natural features (i.e. trees, lake, fields) that contribute to the rural atmosphere.
- Encourage farmland preservation.

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

RESIDENTIAL

- Designate an area for higher density residential uses, as shown on Map 5, *St. Stephens/Oxford SAP Proposed Density Districts*.
- Higher-density development should adhere to the following design concepts:
 - Cluster development option is available;
 - Single-family homes should be developed at a maximum density of 2 units per acre if public water is not available and 3 units per acre if public water is available;
 - 5 percent of a major subdivision should be set aside for open space.
- Designate an area for medium density residential uses, as shown on Map 5.
- Medium-density development should adhere to the following design concepts:
 - Cluster development option is available;
 - Single-family homes should be developed at a maximum density of 1.34 units per acre;
 - 7.5 percent of a major subdivision should be set aside for open space.
- Designate an area for lower-density residential uses, as shown on Map 5.
- Lower-density development should adhere to the following design concepts:
 - Cluster development option is available;
 - Single-family homes should be developed at a maximum density of 1 unit per acre;
 - 10 percent of a major subdivision should be set aside for open space.
- Designate an area within 435 feet from the Catawba River as the Catawba River Corridor, as shown on Map 6, *St. Stephens/Oxford Future Land Use Recommendations*.
- Development in the Catawba River Corridor should adhere to the following design concepts:
 - Cluster development option is available; however, no single lot should be less than 0.75 acres;
 - Single-family homes should be developed at a maximum density of 1 unit per acre;
 - Any water front lot should have a minimum width of 100 feet.
- Multi-family development should be limited to the areas designated as mixed-use village development as shown on Map 6.
 - Multi-family development should also be limited to sites where both public water and sewer are available.
- Setbacks should be increased and driveway cuts limited for residential developments along NC Hwy. 16, Springs Road, Oxford School Road and County Home Road to protect right-of-way for future road expansion.
- Require a minimum number of trees on each housing space of manufactured home parks.
- Residential subdivisions should incorporate the following additional design criteria:
 - landscaping/buffering;

- subdivision signs;
- sidewalks – as defined under pedestrian systems in the Transportation section of this plan;
- tree ordinance;
- internal access;
- cluster subdivisions should be available as an option to conventional subdivisions.

- To protect property values, appearance and character of the community, the area within Catawba River Corridor should be assigned a zoning classification of R-1. Construction of “stick built” homes has been the trend along the Catawba River Corridor and the zoning should reflect that trend.

- Increase enforcement of the Catawba County junk ordinance.

COMMERCIAL

- Setbacks should be increased and driveway cuts limited for commercial developments along NC Hwy. 16, Springs Road, Oxford School Road and County Home Road in order to protect right-of-way for future road expansion.
 - Commercial uses should adhere to additional appearance criteria, similar to the current US Hwy. 321 guidelines, including:
 - the option of either placing parking in the rear of the building with less landscaping required or placing parking in the front of the building and incorporating additional landscaping;
 - stronger signage regulations;
 - required access management;
 - incorporation of Conover’s landscaping requirements;
 - buffering from residential uses.

- The following nodes should be designated Rural Commercial with a maximum total area of 10 acres per node and a maximum gross leasable area of 15,000 square feet per lot:
 - Lee Cline Road and Houston Mill Road;
 - NC Hwy. 16 and St. Peters Church Road*;
 - NC Hwy. 16 and Springs Road*;
 - NC Hwy. 16 and Swinging Bridge Road*;
 - Oxford School Road and Riverbend Road (see Map 6).

** Re-examination of these areas should occur within 5 years to determine if a Neighborhood Commercial designation is warranted.*

- The following nodes should be designated Neighborhood Commercial with a total area of 10 to 25 acres per node and maximum gross leasable area of 50,000 square feet per lot:
 - St. Peters Church Road and Springs Road (see Map 6).

- The following area should be designated as a Commercial Corridor with additional standards that limit driveway cuts, require additional landscaping along road frontage and in parking lots and limit the number, location and height of signs:
 - Springs Road from County Home Road west to the study area boundary (see Map 6).

- The following area should be designated as a Community Center with a total area of 20 to 40 acres per node and maximum gross leasable area of 100,000 square feet per lot. Businesses in this area should buffer structures and parking from I-40.
 - The interchange at I-40 and Oxford School Road (see Map 6).

- The following areas should be designated as mixed-use:
 - South of St. John’s Church Road to the study area boundary and east to Rock Barn Road should permit a mixed-use village type development;
 - South of Rock Barn Road to the study area boundary should permit a mix of neighborhood business and office-institutional uses (see Map 6).

- Billboards should be limited to the Interstate 40 corridor. The use of logo signs on Interstate 40 should be encouraged.

OFFICE-INSTITUTIONAL

- The following area should be designated for office-institutional uses with a total area of 5 to 10 acres for the node:
 - NC Hwy. 16 and C&B Farm Road (see Map 6).

INDUSTRIAL

- Zone for industrial areas in park-like settings with the option to mix with high-impact commercial uses.
- The following areas should be designated for industrial uses:
 - South of Oxford School Road to I-40. Buildings and parking in this area should be buffered from I-40 (see Map 6);
 - South of Interstate 40 and north of US Highway 70 between Rock Barn Road and North Oxford Street (see Map 6).

OPEN SPACE

- Assist property owners of rural farms in preserving those uses by providing information on conservation easements and tax credit measures. In addition, create agricultural districts as allowed by State Statutes. Rezoning to this district should occur at the request of the property owner.
- Develop a mechanism for preserving open space resources by creating a transfer of development rights (TDR) type component for the zoning ordinance. Catawba County would need to pursue State legislative authority.
- Protect rural character and open space by requiring dedication of open space within subdivisions.

TRANSPORTATION

CURRENT CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

Roads & Highways

Transportation systems within the St. Stephens/Oxford study area are primarily planned by the Hickory-Newton-Conover Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Since its inception in 1983, the MPO's planning area has faced significant growth in retail, commercial and residential developments. Consequently, traffic congestion has become a problem, which St. Stephens/Oxford is experiencing.

Interstate 40, Highway 16 and Springs Road are major thoroughfares serving the St. Stephens/Oxford communities. The following table illustrates the significant increase of vehicles per day (VPD) utilizing these roads.

	NC Hwy 16 N of St. Peters Church Rd	NC Hwy 16 N of Conover City Limit	Springs Rd N of Rifle Range Rd	I-40 w/i Study Area
1988	6,100 VPD	5,000 VPD	6,000 VPD	22,500
1994	8,900 VPD	8,600 VPD	N/A	36,100
1999	12,000 VPD	12,000 VPD	12,000 VPD	43,000
2025	27,500 VPD	N/A	24,800 VPD	70,000-75,000

VPD = Vehicles Per Day Source: NCDOT Traffic Count Maps

To reduce traffic congestion and adequately provide for future travel demands, the MPO adopted the Hickory-Newton-Conover Urban Area Transportation Plan in 1986 and updated the plan in 1996. The most current update, the 2025 *Hickory-Newton-Conover Urban Area Transportation Plan*, includes six projects affecting the St. Stephens/Oxford study area. Three projects address anticipated traffic volumes that will exceed highway capacity. Springs Road will be widened to accommodate multi-lanes from its current two-lane section to its terminus with NC Highway 16. Interstate 40 will be widened to six lanes and NC Highway 16 will be widened to multi-lanes from its intersection with Interstate 40 to the Alexander County border.

Three other projects involve extensions or realignments of existing roads. The North Crosstown thoroughfare will be a multi-lane road linking NC Highway 16 North with Spencer Road as part of the Newton-Conover loop system. The projected traffic volume on North Crosstown in 2025 is 20,900 vehicles per day. Fairgrove Church Road Extension will

be a two-lane road extending from its current terminus with US 70-A North to County Home Road. The projected traffic volume on Fairgrove Church Road Extension in 2025 is 12,000 vehicles per day north of US 70-A and 7,600 vehicles per day north of Section House Road. Section House Road will be a two-lane road realigned to link with Kool Park Road. The projected traffic volume on Section House Road in 2025 is 12,600 vehicles per day.

Pedestrian System

Presently, Catawba County does not regulate or require sidewalk construction in new developments. In general, St. Stephens/Oxford lacks a pedestrian system offering options for connectivity between residential areas and commercial developments. However, it is now the policy of the MPO and NCDOT to evaluate any new road construction project for potential pedestrian facilities (i.e. sidewalks and crossovers) and bicycle accommodations.

Bicycle System

The St. Stephens/Oxford study area does not currently have an integrated system of bicycle trails. Riverbend Park offers a system of off-road bicycle trails. Additionally, NCDOT has funded a Bicycle Route Map and signing project that began in spring 2002. A draft Bicycle Route Map has been completed and NCDOT is evaluating the proposed routes. Completion of the project is expected in the fall of 2003. In compliance with NCDOT's policy, the Springs Road and NC Highway 16 road widening projects should be evaluated for their potential to provide bicycle lanes connecting with Riverbend Park.

Transit System

The Piedmont Wagon Transit System (PWTS) offers limited transit service to St. Stephens/Oxford residents. Five days a week vans are available through the Piedmont Wagon to transport senior citizens and disabled residents in the St. Stephens/Oxford area. In addition, the Riverbend Route, a Rural General Public Route, operates on a fixed route two days per week. The Riverbend Route originates in downtown Newton and follows Main Street (NC Highway 16) through downtown Conover north to Riverbend Park. The Route loops back along Springs Road to Section House Road then to Sipe Road and County Home Road and finally returns to NC Highway 16. Plans are underway to expand the frequency and service area as well as by adding bicycle racks to the minibus. The addition of bicycle racks would offer residents transit service to Riverbend Park and other destinations where bicycle trails are available.

Passenger Rail

The NCDOT has determined that the next major expansion of passenger rail service in the State will be in Western North Carolina. Plans are underway to initiate service between Raleigh and Asheville with a stop in downtown Hickory. A portion of the former Hickory depot, now entirely occupied by a restaurant, will return to a passenger waiting area. This service is expected to be operational by 2008.

The following map (Map 7) illustrates the current and planned transportation system in St. Stephens/Oxford SAP.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

ROADS & HIGHWAYS

- Reduce traffic congestion.
- Provide better access management.
- Establish safer roads for drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Create more aesthetically pleasing road designs.
- Maintain rural character.

PEDESTRIAN SYSTEM

- Provide a safe environment for pedestrians en route to schools, churches, etc.
- Encourage development that is pedestrian friendly.

BICYCLE SYSTEM

- Establish safer roads for bicyclists.
- Provide a bicycle loop to tie in with Riverbend Park.

TRANSIT SYSTEM

- Support efforts to promote and increase public transportation alternatives.

PASSENGER RAIL

- Study connections, via the Piedmont Wagon Transit System, with the Western North Carolina Passenger Rail Service.

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Catawba County does not maintain roads; therefore, the following recommendations will be forwarded to NCDOT or used in area wide transportation planning.

ROADS & HIGHWAYS

- Evaluate safety and design of the following intersections:
 - NC Highway 16 and St. Johns Church Road,
 - C & B Farm Road and NC Highway 16,
 - Sipe Road and Section House Road,
 - Springs Road and County Home Road,
 - Springs Road and Highway 16,
 - Rock Barn Road (straighten curve at Lyle Creek).
- Evaluate the width of existing multi-lane roads to assure that the lanes are wide enough for multiple vehicles to travel side by side.
- Widen the following roads:
 - Springs Road needs to be widened from the end of the five lane section to NC Highway 16;
 - Widen and/or replace the bridge on Lee Cline Road at Rifle Range Road;
 - Widen and/or replace the bridge on Lee Cline Road north of Houston Mill Road;
 - Widen and/or replace the bridge on Snow Creek Road.
- Pursue installation of traffic signals at the intersection of Bunker Hill High School Road and Oxford School Road (see Map 7).
- Encourage traffic-calming devices, such as rumble strips, within existing subdivisions and on St. Johns Church Road.
- When NC Highway 16 and Springs Road are widened, construct a four lane divided highway with a landscaped median. In order to provide adequate access provide median breaks at least every $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile and at intersections with other State roads, schools and major subdivisions/developments. Landscaping should be maintained and low growing, to preserve visibility.
- Support completion of State schedule to pave remaining gravel roads.
- Require turn lanes at existing and future schools.
- Include projected traffic counts from proposed developments in addition to existing traffic when reviewing development proposals.
- Evaluate the possibility of a local scenic highway designation for the following route: beginning at the I-40 interchange with Oxford School Road, continue northwest along Oxford School Road to Riverbend Road then north along Hwy. 16 to the river. (see Map 7).
- Limit driveway cuts on major highways and encourage shared access points for both residential and commercial subdivisions and developments.

PEDESTRIAN SYSTEM

- Require sidewalks, or a comparable pedestrian/bicycle path, in new high-density housing developments (i.e. minimum 25 lots of ½ acre or less in size) on one side of the street. Prohibit a certificate of occupancy until the sidewalk or a performance guarantee is in place.
- Request sidewalks on State roads when they are widened. Sidewalks on the following roads could tie in with existing or planned sidewalks in Conover, Claremont and Hickory:
 - County Home Road,
 - Rock Barn Road,
 - C & B Farm Road,
 - Lee Cline Road,
 - St. Johns Church Road,
 - NC Highway 16,
 - Sipe Road.
- Provide a pedestrian crossing for St. Johns Church.

BICYCLE SYSTEM

- Designate bicycle routes that tie in with existing or planned bicycle routes in Conover and Hickory.
- When roads and highways are resurfaced, widen the roads to accommodate a designated bicycle lane on the following:
 - NC Highway 16,
 - Springs Road.
- Increase pavement width to the maximum extent feasible along the following roads for bicycle routes:
 - Oxford School Road,
 - Riverbend Road,
 - Rest Home Road,
 - County Home Road.

TRANSIT SYSTEM

- Publicize existing services offered by the Piedmont Wagon, especially handicap accessibility.
- Enhance visibility and quality of transit stops by adding shelters.
- Add stops closer to pockets of population (i.e. retirement communities, large developments) and destination points (i.e. airport, businesses, rental car facilities).

PASSENGER RAIL

- Encourage the Piedmont Wagon Transit System to schedule trips to coordinate with the Western North Carolina passenger rail service.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND PUBLIC SERVICES

CURRENT CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

SCHOOLS

The St. Stephens/Oxford study area is located within 15 different school districts. Students from this study area attend high school at Bunker Hill, St. Stephens, and Newton-Conover High Schools. Students from this area also attend Catawba Intermediate School as well as Arndt, Riverbend and Newton-Conover Middle Schools. There are seven elementary school districts within the St. Stephens/Oxford study area: Murray, St. Stephens, Campbell, Oxford, Shuford, Claremont and Lyle Creek.

In 1999, the Catawba County, Hickory, and Newton-Conover Schools systems commissioned the Western Piedmont Council of Governments to develop the *Catawba County Growth Estimation Model*. This model identified and examined various factors and trends that impact student population. This model is used to plan for the need, size and location of future school buildings.

Oxford Elementary School

The student population at Oxford Elementary School exceeded building capacity until the 2001-02 school year when Lyle Creek School opened. The opening of Lyle Creek Elementary School lowered the student occupancy to 65% of Oxford's building capacity.

Oxford Elementary School 1 st Month Enrollment			
School Year	Total Student Population	Change	% Change
1995-1996	819	-	-
1996-1997	935	116	14.2%
1997-1998	942	7	0.7%
1998-1999	1062	120	12.7%
1999-2000	948	-114	-10.7%
2000-2001	960	12	1.3%
2001-2002	502	-458	-47.7%

Source: Catawba County Growth Estimation Model: Study of the Catawba County, Hickory and Newton-Conover School Systems, 2001

The *Catawba County Growth Estimation Model* predicts 70 new students will attend Oxford Elementary between 2001 and 2007. With the addition of 70 students Oxford will still only be 75% of building capacity.

Lyle Creek Elementary School

The opening of Lyle Creek Elementary in August of 2001 relieved serious overcrowding at Oxford Elementary. The Lyle Creek district was carved from the Oxford district. The Catawba County Growth Estimation Model calculates significant growth within the Lyle Creek District. While the school opened at 65% building capacity, it is expected the school enrollment will reach 91% of capacity by the 2007-08 school year.

Riverbend Middle School

Riverbend Middle School opened in 1999 with an enrollment equaling 65% of building capacity. The school was built with a higher student capacity than its current enrollment to accommodate growth in the coming years.

Riverbend Middle School 1 st Month Enrollment			
School Year	Total Student Population	Change	% Change
1999-2000	470	-	-
2000-2001	503	33	7%
2001-2002	504	1	0.2%

Source: Catawba County Growth Estimation Model: Study of the Catawba County, Hickory and Newton-Conover School Systems, 2001

When Riverbend opened in 1999, fewer than 500 students were enrolled. By the 2007-08 school year, Riverbend is projected to enroll 700 students, slightly over 100% of building capacity.

Bunker Hill High School

Bunker Hill High School has experienced significant growth since 1999 due to residential growth in the district. During the 2001-2002 school year Bunker Hill was slightly over building capacity at 101%.

Bunker Hill High School 1 st Month Enrollment			
School Year	Total Student Population	Change	% Change
1995-1996	731	-	-
1996-1997	713	-18	-2.5%
1997-1998	715	2	0.3%

1998-1999	695	-20	-2.8%
1999-2000	753	58	8.3%
2000-2001	810	57	7.6%
2001-2002	835	25	3.1%

Source: Catawba County Growth Estimation Model: Study of the Catawba County, Hickory and Newton-Conover School Systems, 2001

Rapid growth of student enrollment is expected for Bunker Hill. Without an addition to the school, Bunker Hill is expected to reach 145% of building capacity by the 2007-08 school year. An addition is planned that includes 12 new classrooms and a new cafeteria, however, it is contingent upon funding for the project.

PARKS AND GREENWAYS

Riverbend Park is located within the study area along the Catawba River and offers a variety of passive recreational activities. This is the first County-owned and operated park with the second park on Baker Mountain, which opened June 2002. Riverbend Park includes over 450 acres of land with hiking, bicycle and equestrian trails, fishing and canoeing. Riverbend Park also provides picnic facilities and an observation deck on the Catawba River. The schools, churches and some private organizations operate other passive and active recreational facilities. Currently, there are no greenways within the St. Stephens/Oxford study area.

LIBRARIES

Catawba County operates a well-established library system. The Catawba County Library System operates one central library, a law library and six branch libraries. The St. Stephens/Oxford area is served by three of those branches. Though no library branch is located within the study area, most of the St. Stephens/Oxford area is within the six-mile service area of a branch library. The St. Stephens, Conover and Claremont branch libraries all serve the study area. The Conover and Claremont branches are partnerships with those municipalities. This cost sharing partnership serves the residents of several communities.

The Claremont Branch Library opened in February 2002. It is located inside the Claremont City Hall and is funded through the partnership between the City of Claremont and Catawba County. This facility serves Claremont residents as well as residents of the study area.

The Conover Branch Library is located within the Conover City Hall and is another example of intergovernmental cooperation. The costs of operating this facility are shared by the City of Conover and Catawba County. A large portion of the service area for this facility falls within the study area.

The St. Stephens Branch Library is located on Springs Road just west of the study area. This branch serves most of the western section of the study area and is operated and funded by the County.

Only the extreme northeast section of the study area is beyond the six-mile service area of a branch library. Currently, no additional branches are planned for Catawba County.

WATER SERVICE

The City of Hickory, City of Conover and Catawba County have partnered to extend water service to areas within the St. Stephens/Oxford study area. The County pays for construction of the water lines while the municipalities maintain the lines. Revenues are shared between the County and the respective municipality. The major water lines within the study area extend from Conover north on Rock Barn Road, along Oxford School Road, from Conover north on NC Highway 16 to Shell Hollar Road, along County Home Road, Lee Cline Road, Springs Road and St. Peters Church Road.

In coordination with the municipalities, Catawba County has recently formed the Utilities Advisory Committee to address water and sewer issues on a countywide basis. There are no immediate plans for major water line extensions in the study area; however, a loop connection is possible from the water tank on NC Highway 16 to the new line on St. Peters Church Road.

SEWER SERVICE

The City of Conover has extended sewer lines within the study area along Lyle Creek south of C & B Farm Road.

Conover is also constructing a new lift station along Lyle Creek near Rock Barn Road and Shook Road. This lift station can service a large basin extending north to Oxford School Road. No other major sewer line expansions are planned for immediate future within the study area. As mentioned above, the newly formed Utilities Advisory Committee will address current and future needs.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Catawba County Emergency Communications Center is the central receiving point for all 911 calls within Catawba County. The center is regarded as one of the most advanced centers in western North Carolina utilizing the newest software and technology. The center dispatches all fire, medical, rescue and police calls for service within Catawba County, except police for Hickory and Newton. The center also gives medical instructions to callers while they await arrival of medical personnel.

Law Enforcement

The Catawba County Sheriff's Department serves the study area. The patrol division is made up of twenty-six officers among four shifts. The Sheriff's Department also operates a jail and maintains security for the court system in Catawba County. Crime prevention, investigations and civil enforcement are other functions conducted by the Sheriff's Department.

Fire Protection

The Oxford and St. Stephens Volunteer Fire Departments serve most of the study area. The St. Stephens Fire Department, chartered in 1957, was among the first rural fire departments established in Catawba County. The St. Stephens Fire Department serves the western portion of the study area. The department is comprised of 24 volunteer firefighters and one full-time chief. The department operates two stations along Springs Road and maintains an insurance rating of 5. The department currently maintains 2 pumpers (one with a aerial ladder), 3 pumper tankers and 1 mini-pumper (brush truck). The department plans to add one additional full-time position during the 2002-2003 fiscal year.

The Oxford Fire Department is located on Oxford School Road near Riverbend Road and serves most of the eastern portion of the study area. Oxford Fire Department currently has 45 firefighters, 3 pumper-tankers, 1 pumper and 1 brush truck. The Oxford Fire Department maintains a split fire insurance rating of 6/9. Areas with public water are assigned a rating of 6 while areas without public water are assigned a rating of 9. The department plans to begin constructing an additional station located on NC Highway 16 at Shell Hollar Road. The Oxford Fire Department also plans to purchase an additional pumper truck during the 2002-2003 fiscal year.

Emergency Medical Services

Although an EMS base is not located within the study area, two bases respond to calls within the St. Stephens/Oxford area. The St. Stephens Base is located just outside the study area on Springs Road near Section House Road. This base responds to calls for the western portion of the St. Stephens/Oxford area and the northern section of Hickory. The Catawba Base is located in downtown Catawba and responds to calls east of NC Highway 16 and south of the Town of Catawba. Plans are underway to construct a new EMS base on NC Highway 16. The proposed base would be part of the new Oxford Fire Station as a result of a cooperative agreement between Catawba County and the Oxford Fire Department. The new base would house an additional crew, which would decrease response times for the area.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

SCHOOLS

- Plan to accommodate student enrollment growth.
- Plan for community-based schools.

PARKS AND GREENWAYS

- Provide adequate recreational activities for all segments of the population.
- Provide adequate open space and recreational facilities on a neighborhood basis.

LIBRARIES

- Maintain adequate level of library services for the community.
- Encourage continued cooperation with municipalities.

WATER/SEWER SERVICES

- Provide water and sewer services in higher density areas.
- Take a regional approach to planning of future water and sewer infrastructure.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

- Maintain and expand existing levels of service.

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The grouping or sharing of facilities is an effective method to reduce capital costs. When possible the sharing of facilities is encouraged.

A community center can serve as a focal point for people to gather and learn about the history of a community. The construction of a community center is recommended to accommodate needed meeting space and to serve as a cultural learning center.

SCHOOLS

- Smaller community based schools should be built to promote better learning environments. High Schools should be limited to a maximum of 850 students.
- Continue to use school facilities for public recreation activities.
- School facility planners should consider existing county and municipal plans when selecting new school locations. New schools should be located in higher density areas as indicated on Map 5.
- Continue to factor in available school capacity when reviewing development proposals until another school bond referendum is held. If the school bond passes, school capacity requirements in the high-density areas should be released immediately. If the school bond does not pass, school capacity requirements should still be released and other means of school funding sought.

PARKS AND GREENWAYS

- The possibility of a multi-jurisdictional greenway along the Catawba River beginning at Riverbend Park and extending downstream should be examined. In addition, a trail connection should be made from the Oxford access on Lake Hickory to Riverbend Park.
- The possibility of a midway access point, for canoeing, between Riverbend Park and the Lookout Access should be examined.
- Active recreation parks should be constructed within the study area.

LIBRARIES

- Continue cooperation with municipalities in providing library services.
- Maintain existing levels of library service and increase as needed.

WATER/SEWER SERVICES

- Major utility expansions in high-density areas, as indicated on Map 5, should have a priority.
- Partner with municipalities to provide utilities that are consistent with adopted land use plans.
- Continue to pursue Community Development Block Grants for the expansion of utilities.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

- Maintain existing levels of service.
- The construction of an EMS base at the water tank site on NC Highway 16 is recommended.

HOUSING

CURRENT CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

Population growth in the St. Stephens/Oxford area contributed to increases in the number of housing units within the study area. The St. Stephens/Oxford area experienced a 33.8% growth in population from 1990 to 2000 with continued growth projected. Building permits are an effective way to measure housing growth. The following table illustrates the growth by type of housing: site-built, singlewide manufactured and doublewide manufactured.

Catawba County Residential Permits for the St. Stephens/Oxford SAP 1997-2001			
Year	Single-Family Site-Built Permits	Singlewide Manufactured Home Permits	Doublewide Manufactured Home Permits
1997	113	47	46
1998	134	82	50
1999	117	60	56
2000	117	32	59
2001	113	18	61
Total	594	239	272

Source: Catawba County Permit Center, 2002.

Manufactured homes represented 46 percent of new homes built from 1997 to 2001, while site-built homes represented a slight majority of the new homes built during that same time within the study area. The number of site-built homes has remained relatively static since 1997. Singlewide manufactured homes have decreased sharply in recent years while doublewide manufactured homes have increased steadily. The total number of manufactured homes, both singlewide and doublewide, has decreased steadily since 1998. With the steady reduction of new manufactured homes, site-built homes represented almost 59 percent of new homes built in 2001 while manufactured homes accounted for 41 percent.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

SINGLE-FAMILY

- Encourage a diverse range of housing densities and types that will meet the needs of all segments of the population, household types and income levels.

MANUFACTURED HOMES

- Manufactured housing should represent a limited portion of the housing stock within the study area.

MULTI-FAMILY

- Encourage the construction of multi-family housing as an affordable housing option.
- Development of multi-family housing should occur where appropriate public infrastructure exists.

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

SINGLE-FAMILY

- Designate an area for higher-density residential uses, as shown on Map 5, *St. Stephens/Oxford SAP Proposed Density Districts*.
- Higher-density development should adhere to the following design concepts:
 - Cluster development option is available;
 - Single-family homes should be developed at a maximum density of 2 units per acre if public water is not available and 3 units per acre if public water is available;
 - 5 percent of a major subdivision should be set aside as open space.
- Designate an area for medium-density residential uses, as shown on Map 5.

- Medium-density development should adhere to the following design concepts:
 - Cluster development option is available;
 - Single-family homes should be developed at a maximum density of 1.34 units per acre;
 - 7.5 percent of a major subdivision should be set aside as open space.
- Designate an area for lower-density residential uses, as shown on Map 5.
 - Cluster development option is available;
 - Single-family homes should be developed at a maximum density of 1 unit per acre;
 - 10 percent of a major subdivision should be set aside as open space.
- Designate an area within 435 feet from the Catawba River as the Catawba River Corridor, as shown on Map 6, *St. Stephens/Oxford SAP Future Land Use Recommendations*.
- Development in the Catawba River Corridor should adhere to the following design concepts:
 - Cluster development option is available; however, no single lot should be smaller than 0.75 acres;
 - Single-family homes should be developed at a maximum density of 1 unit per acre;
 - Any water front lot should have a minimum width of 100 feet.

MANUFACTURED HOMES

- Rezone the areas as shown on Map 8, *St. Stephens/Oxford SAP Proposed Zoning Map Amendments*. Existing development patterns and scenic area preservation were determining factors for the proposed Zoning Map amendments. The protection of property values and community character were important considerations in determining the areas for specified housing types (R-1, R-2, R-3 zoning).
- Allow non-conforming manufactured homes in the R-1 district to be replaced with singlewide manufactured homes when a property owner requests to replace a home.
- To protect the property values, appearance and character of the community, the area within the Catawba River Corridor should be assigned a zoning classification of R-1. Construction of "stick built" homes has been the trend along the Catawba River Corridor and the zoning should reflect that trend.

MULTI-FAMILY

- Encourage multi-family development, as shown on Map 6, as an affordable housing alternative.
- Multi-family development should only occur where public water and sewer is available.
- The density of multi-family development should not exceed 15 dwelling units per acre.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CURRENT CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

The economy of Catawba County has shifted from the once dominant furniture and textile industries to a more diverse base. The decline of furniture and textile jobs has resulted in transition of workers to new fields such as fiber optics cable, coaxial cable and other electronic equipment. The service industry has also increased greatly with Hickory serving as a regional center for shopping and entertainment.

The St. Stephens/Oxford area has limited existing industrial development. Most of the County's industrial base is located in the Claremont, Conover and Hickory areas. Interstate 40 serves as a transportation backbone for industrial and heavy commercial development. As a result, the municipalities along I-40 have experienced tremendous growth through the last three decades.

Significant industrial development is not expected for the study area other than the areas close to Interstate 40. Most of the areas adjacent to I-40 have the needed infrastructure to attract businesses.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

COMMERCIAL

- Create more aesthetically pleasing developments.

INDUSTRIAL

- Continue to separate industrial and residential uses.
- Direct industrial growth to areas with appropriate infrastructure.

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

COMMERCIAL

-Commercial uses should adhere to additional appearance criteria, similar to the current US Hwy. 321 guidelines, including:

- the option of either placing parking in the rear of the building with less landscaping required or placing parking in the front of the building and incorporating additional landscaping;
- stronger signage regulations;
- required access management;
- incorporation of Conover's landscaping requirements;
- buffering from residential uses.

-The following nodes should be designated Rural Commercial with a maximum total area of 10 acres per node and a maximum gross leasable area of 15,000 square feet per lot:

- Lee Cline Road and Houston Mill Road;
- NC Hwy. 16 and St. Peters Church Road*;
- NC Hwy. 16 and Springs Road*;
- NC Hwy. 16 and Swinging Bridge Road*;
- Oxford School Road and Riverbend Road (see Map 6).

** Re-examination of these areas should occur within 5 years to determine if a Neighborhood Commercial designation is warranted.*

-The following node should be designated Neighborhood Commercial with a total area of 10 to 25 acres per node and maximum gross leasable area of 50,000 square feet per lot:

- St. Peters Church Road and Springs Road (see Map 6).

-The following area should be designated as a Commercial Corridor with additional standards that limit driveway cuts, require additional landscaping along the road frontage and in parking lots and limit the number, location and height of signs:

- Springs Road from County Home Road west to the study area boundary (See Map 6).

-The following area should be designated as a Community Center with a total area of 20 to 40 acres per node and maximum gross leasable area of 100,000 square feet per lot. Businesses in this area should buffer structures and parking from I-40.

- The interchange at I-40 and Oxford School Road (see Map 6).

-The following areas should be designated as mixed-use:

- South of St. John's Church Road to the study area boundary and east to Rock Barn Road should permit mixed-use village type development;
- South of Rock Barn Road to the study area boundary should permit a mix of neighborhood business and office-institutional uses (see Map 6).

INDUSTRIAL

- Industrial uses should be developed in an attractive park-like setting.
- Zone for industrial areas in park-like settings with the option to mix with heavy commercial uses.
- The following areas should be designated for industrial uses:

- South of Oxford School Road to I-40. Buildings and parking in this area should be buffered from I-40 (see Map 6);
- South of Interstate 40 and north of US Highway 70 between Rock Barn Road and North Oxford Street (see Map 6).

NATURAL RESOURCES

CURRENT CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

St. Stephens/Oxford residents identify open space, rural setting and scenic topography as significant community assets. The study area is blessed with scenic landscapes created by the rolling hills, streams, lakes and the Catawba River. However, sprawling development is changing the landscape to a more suburban view.

RIVERS

The Catawba River, Lakes Hickory and Lookout Shoals form the northern and eastern border of the study area. The river and its lakes are a definable feature for the area. The Catawba River serves as a major source for drinking water and recreation. Two boat accesses are located within the study area. The Oxford access to Lake Hickory is located north of St. Peter's Church Road on Claude Road. The Lookout access to Lake Lookout Shoals is located on Lookout Dam Road (see Map 9, *St. Stephens/Oxford SAP Natural and Cultural Resources*).

To protect water quality, the State of North Carolina enacted the Water Supply Watershed Protection Program in 1989. The program requires all local governments with land use planning jurisdiction in designated watersheds to administer a Water Supply Watershed Protection Ordinance to protect surface drinking water. Lookout Shoals Lake has been designated a source for water supply and as a result a majority of the St. Stephens/Oxford area falls within the WS-IV Watershed (see Map 9). The WS-IV critical area extends 1/2 mile from the lake. Within the critical area single-family home lots must be at least 20,000 square feet. Multi-family and non-residential uses are limited to 24 percent impervious coverage of the lot. The WS-IV protected area requires 15,000 square foot lots when curb and gutter is not used and public water or sewer service are provided. When no public utilities (water and sewer) are provided, lots cannot be smaller than 20,000 square feet. Multi-family and non-residential uses are limited to 24 percent impervious coverage of the lot with curb and gutter and 36 percent without curb and gutter.

OPEN SPACE AND SCENIC TOPOGRAPHY

St. Stephens/Oxford residents named rural character, open space and farms as characteristics they value in the community. The amount of vacant land in the study area contributes to the rural character of the St. Stephens/Oxford Community. However, this large amount of vacant land is vulnerable to sprawling development. The Strategic Growth Plan suggested the creation of several programs, such as voluntary transfer of development rights and farmland preservation, to assist property owners in maintaining their current rural use and preserving open space for the community.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

RIVERS

- Protect water quality for future generations.
- Preserve the scenic quality of the river corridor.
- Utilize rivers for environmentally sound recreational activities.

OPEN SPACE AND SCENIC TOPOGRAPHY

- Preserve open space.
- Assist farmers and property owners desiring to maintain the agricultural or open space use of their property.
- Protect scenic corridors.

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

RIVERS

- Create scenic corridors by utilizing rivers, creeks and floodways for open space planning.
- Create and implement design standards for recreational facilities located on the lakes and rivers to protect water quality and scenic beauty.

OPEN SPACE AND SCENIC TOPOGRAPHY

- Preserve green space in undisturbed, natural states to support wildlife corridors. Clustering subdivisions is an effective tool to preserve these corridors.
- A trail connection should be made from the Oxford access on Lake Hickory to Riverbend Park. This project would support the Mountain to the Sea Trail.
- The St. Stephens/Oxford has one identified site as listed in the *Heritage Inventory*. Bald eagles have been seen in the Oxford area and are part of this inventory. Steps to protect resources on the Heritage Inventory are recommended.
- Assist property owners of rural farms in preserving those uses by providing information on conservation easements and tax credit measures. In addition, create agricultural districts as allowed by State Statutes. Designation of this district should occur at the request of the property owner.
- Develop a mechanism for preservation of open space resources by creating a transfer of development rights (TDR) type component for the zoning ordinance. Catawba County would need to pursue State legislative authority.
- Adoption of the Watershed 10/70 provision is recommended. This option should be allowed only in the high-density, mixed use, office-institutional, and industrial areas as shown on Maps 5 and 6.
- Protect rural character and open space by requiring dedication of open space with subdivisions. As stated in the land use section and on Map 5 major subdivisions should dedicate the following amounts of open space:
 - High-Density Area: 5 percent,
 - Medium-Density Area: 7.5 percent,
 - Low-Density Area: 10 percent.
- To protect the water quality and scenic views designate an area within 435 feet from the Catawba River as the Catawba River Corridor, as shown on Map 5.
- Development in the Catawba River Corridor should adhere to the following design concepts:
 - Cluster development option is available; however, no single lot should be smaller than 0.75 acres;
 - Single-family homes should be developed at a maximum density of 1 unit per acre;
 - Any water front lot should have a minimum width of 100 feet.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

CURRENT CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

In the early nineteenth century, agriculture was the livelihood of most residents in the St. Stephens/Oxford area. Today, most residents are not involved in agriculture yet they identify with the farming culture and consider themselves part of an agricultural community. Though development has encroached on a significant amount of farmland, the remaining farms contribute to the life and atmosphere that identifies the St. Stephens/Oxford Communities.

Churches have also played significant role in the lives of St. Stephens/Oxford residents. The churches have served as a bond for people who live in the area. The St. Stephens name originates from the two Lutheran churches, reflecting the significant role churches have played in the Community.

Many older structures are found within the study area; however, only one is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places (see Map 9). The Rock Barn (circa 1822) was part of the farm of Frederick Hoke, a successful farmer who was instrumental in the formation of Catawba County. He served as the first chairman of the new Catawba County court where he served as justice of the peace.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Recognize and protect cultural resources.

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Bona-fide historical sites should be identified in the St. Stephens/Oxford area.

- Provide the Catawba County Planning Department with an inventory of historically significant sites so that proposed developments on or near those sites may be flagged and encouraged to preserve the character of the area. Historically significant cemeteries and structures should be included in the inventory.
- A community center can serve as a focal point for people to gather and learn about the history of a community. The construction of a community center is recommended to accommodate needed meeting space and to serve as a cultural and historical learning center.

Appendix A

Following are the results from the first community meeting held on May 3, 2001 at Riverbend Middle School. Specific issues that the 17 residents voted on are listed below. The number beside each issue indicates the number of votes it received. If an issue does not have a number beside it, the issue was listed for voting but no one voted for it.

What do you like about St. Stephens/Oxford?

Transportation - 2

Transportation – 2

I-40

Convenience road

Easy access to highways (shopping)

Low traffic

Close to Lake

Close to Church

Commercial/Industrial - 1

Limited industrial - 1

Diversified businesses

Rural Setting - 10

Rural setting (away from congestion) - 6

Great place to raise a family - 2

Rural setting - 1

Small town atmosphere - 1

Privacy

Peaceful

Country atmosphere

Open Spaces

Quiet atmosphere

Topography (trees/lakes)

Closeness/Comradeship

Independent people/great people

Local Church

Family ties

Public Services

Water

Good fire department (volunteer)

Less crime

New schools

Schools

Community schools (short commute)

Neighborhood schools

Low property tax

Affordable

What concerns do you have for St. Stephens/Oxford?

Residential - 8

Rapid housing on small lots - 5

Too many rental mobile home parks - 3

More permanent homes

Larger lot sizes for homes

Over growth
Overcrowding
Property development
Affordable Housing (sewer)

Commercial - 6

Recruiting businesses with tax incentives - 5
Keep shopping in commercial district - 1
Pollution regulation (business)

Transportation - 4

Traffic congestion (CB Farm Road & Highway 16) - 2
Traffic - 1
Speed limits - 1
Stop light at Riverbend & Bunker Hill

Public Services - 20

Water/Sewer – 4

Lack of Water county wide – 4
Water problem long term
Lack of sewer
Utility funding

State

State buffer/watershed
Watershed

Schools – 4

School consolidation – 4

Police

Public Safety
County law enforcement
(crime on the rise)

Recreation–2

Lack of recreation for teens -2
Greenways (taxes)

County-10

Lack of long range planning – 9
Litter – 1
Over regulation
Plan before growth
Lack of consolidation of county services
Equal taxing for renters like owners

City

Annexation
Annexation (city)

What is your future vision of St. Stephens/Oxford?
--

Public Services - 8

Increased water & sewer - 5
Adequate schools - 1
Street lights (Highway 16 to Oxford School) - 1
Need more police protection - 1
Need more daytime patrols
More County water Rock Barn Road and Riverbend area

Transportation - 1

Paving of Gravel Roads - 1
Turning lanes
Bus turning lanes
Public transportation
Highway 16 to be widened (turn lanes)

Residential - 15

Preservation of farmland - 10
Subdivisions regulated to build community atmosphere - 2
Housing maintained - 1

Affordability - 1
More trees (no clear cutting) - 1
Planned development
Cow pastures
Clean rural area

Commercial - 8

Controlled industrial growth in restricted zones - 7
Neighborhood business & schools - 1
Keep retail away from residential
Trash clean up along lake
Boat landing regulations

- c. Proposed amendment to the Catawba County Subdivision Ordinance, Chapter 36, Article II, Section 36-36 (e) (3) a. and b. Time limits on approval of preliminary major plats.

Assistant Planner Rich A. Hoffman said the Subdivision Review Board (SRB) and subsequently the Planning Board requested that the Board of Commissioners review and approve an amendment to the Subdivision Ordinance, Chapter 36, Article II, Sec. 36-36 (e) (3) a. and b. This particular section deals with time limits as it applies to the extension of major subdivision plats. The request is to change the expiration time period of preliminary major subdivision plans from two years to three years before it would be reviewed by the Subdivision Review Board for an extension request. Major subdivisions, generally those that require new road construction, are approved in a two-stage process. The SRB approves the preliminary plan and the planning staff approves the final plat. Currently, preliminary subdivisions are approved in two-year increments up to a total of six years. At the end of six years if a development has not received final approval it is considered expired. In order for the SRB to extend a preliminary approval, one of the conditions that the developer has to show is substantial expenditure of resources directly related to the subdivision development. With the current two-year expiration date a subdivision would come before the SRB twice before the six-year final expiration date. With a three-year expiration date a development would come before the SRB only once to request an extension and therefore alleviates the need to present additional substantial expenditure of resources information.

The SRB felt that a one-time extension review at a three-year increment is sufficient to keep a development on track and did not feel the need to review the same development for more than one extension request.

Mr. Hoffman said not all of the two-year language has been changed to three years in Chapter 36, Article II, Sec. 36-36 (e) (3) b. All of the existing subdivisions that fall under this section have either expired or have come back before the SRB for an extension request. Therefore, changing all of the two-year language to three years would not be applicable. The Subdivision Review Board at its February 25, 2003 meeting, recommended that the expiration date for a preliminary major subdivision plan change from two years to three years. If the ordinance is amended, any preliminary subdivision that has an existing two-year expiration date should automatically be increased to a three-year expiration date.

The Planning Board conducted a public hearing on March 31, 2003. No one spoke in favor of or in opposition to the request. The Planning Board voted unanimously in favor of the changes to the Subdivision Ordinance with a subsequent recommendation to the Board of Commissioners for approval. Language with a strikethrough would be deleted with the corresponding underlined language added.

Ordinance No. 2003-07

BE IT ORDAINED that Chapter 36 SUBDIVISIONS, Article II. PLAT APPROVAL, Sec. 36-36 Application, review and approval procedures for major subdivisions, (e) Time limits, (3) Approval of preliminary major plats and expiration of vested rights, items a. and b. of the Catawba County Code are hereby amended to read as follows:

Sec. 36-36 Application, review and approval procedures for major subdivisions.

- (e) *Time limits.* Time limits for actions on applications and for work to proceed are as follows:

- (3) *Approval of preliminary major plats and expiration of vested rights.* Time limit on the approval of preliminary major plats and the expiration of vested rights are as follows:
- a. *Preliminary plats approved on or after the effective date of the ordinance from which this section is derived.* For preliminary plats approved on or after the effective date of the ordinance from which this section is derived, if the subdivision has not been submitted for final plat approval within ~~two~~ three years from the date the preliminary plat approval was granted by the subdivision review board, the preliminary plat approval expires, and the application process must begin again as a new application and must meet the ordinances in effect at that time. Any rights vesting, as defined in G.S. 153A-344.1, shall expire along with the application. An applicant may apply to the subdivision review board for an extension of up to ~~two~~ three years, so long as the application is filed prior to the preliminary plat approval's expiration date. Such an extension may be granted only where the applicant demonstrates good cause and where there has been a substantial expenditure of resources directly related to the subdivision development. The cumulative time period for obtaining final plat approval shall not exceed a total period of six years from the date of the initial preliminary plat approval.
 - b. *Site plans/preliminary plats approved prior to effective date of the ordinance from which this section derives.* For site plans/preliminary plats approved prior to the effective date of the ordinance from which this section is derived, any outstanding site plan/preliminary plat approval shall have two years from the date the site plan/preliminary plat was approved to obtain final plat approval. Where such final approval has not been obtained within two years from the date of receiving site plan/preliminary plat approval, the applicant may apply to the subdivision review board for an extension of up to two years, so long as the application is filed prior to the site plan/preliminary plat approval's expiration date. Such an extension may be granted only where the applicant demonstrates good cause and where there has been a substantial expenditure of resources directly related to the subdivision development. For those developments whose site plan/preliminary plat approval is older than two years where the developer has finalized at least one phase involving road construction improvements, an applicant may apply to the subdivision review board for an extension of time up to ~~two~~ three years. Such an extension may be granted only where the applicant demonstrates good cause and where there has been a substantial expenditure of resources directly related to the subdivision development. In all cases where extensions are granted, the cumulative time period for obtaining final plat approval shall not exceed a total period of six years from the date of the initial site plan/preliminary plat approval. For those developments where the site plan/preliminary plat approval is older than two years and the developer has not finalized at least one phase involving road construction improvements, the approval is expired, and the development must meet the current ordinance requirements.

This 21st day of April, 2003.

/s/ Katherine W. Barnes, Chair
Catawba County Board of Commissioners

Chair Barnes opened the public hearing by saying this was the time and place as advertised for the public hearing and asked if anyone wished to speak either for or against.

There being no one wishing to speak, Chair Barnes closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Barger said he sits on the Subdivision Review Board (SRB) and this request came from that Board to help the development of some of the subdivisions so the developer would not have to go before the SRB no more than two times. He endorsed the proposed changes on behalf of the SRB.

Commissioner Barger made a motion to approve the aforementioned ordinance amending Chapter 36, Article II, Sec. 36-36 (e) (3) b. of the Catawba County Code of Ordinances. The motion carried unanimously.

d. FY 2004 Catawba County Rural Operating Assistance Program Grant Application.

Transit Director, Piedmont Wagon, Michael Bradshaw said the Rural Operating Assistance Program Grant Application is an annual grant that is available from the North Carolina Department of Transportation-Public Transportation Division (NCDOT-PTD). The purpose of the grant is to provide funds for operational expenses for counties that meet the requirements of coordination and consolidation. The grant provides funding from three different programs. They include the Elderly Disabled Transportation Assistance Program (EDTAP), the Work First Program and the Rural General Public Program (RGP) This will be the sixth year that Catawba County has qualified for this grant and made application.

The FY 2004 Rural Operating Assistance Program is projecting a total of \$135,010 in operational funding for the all three programs and an additional request of \$16,000 in Rural General Public Discretionary funds for a total of \$151,010. The requested funding from the NCDOT will be \$73,932 from EDTAP, \$13,227 from Work First, \$47,851 from Rural General Public and \$16,000 from the Rural General Public Discretionary Funds. The required match from Catawba County is \$6,386 or a ten-percent (10%) match on both RGP funds. This match would be a part of the funding that is already allocated annually to the transportation program and would not increase the proposed budget.

The requested funds will allow the consolidated transportation system to continue to provide transportation to senior citizens, the community of the disabled, human service clients and to the general public living outside of the urbanized area. The primary trip purposes are nutrition for senior citizens, medical appointments, shopping, employment and transport to human service facilities.

Staff recommended that the Board of Commissioners hold a public hearing and approve the submission of the FY 2004 Catawba County Rural Operating Assistance Program Grant Application.

Chair Barnes opened the public hearing by saying this was the time and place as advertised for the public hearing and asked if anyone wished to speak either for or against.

There being no one wishing to speak, Chair Barnes closed the public hearing.

After a brief discussion, Commissioner Hunsucker made a motion to approve the FY 2004 Catawba County Rural Operating Assistance Program Grant Application. The motion carried unanimously.

6. Special Guests and Public Comment.

- a. Chair Barnes recognized Robert Braswell, Hickory Public Schools Board of Education Member. She also recognized members from the media: Andrew Mackie, *Hickory Daily Record*; Meg Twohey, *Catawba Valley Neighbors*; Al Mainess, *WNNC*; and Mary Katherine Creel, *Observer-News-Enterprise*.
- b. Mr. Paul Teague, Hickory Plumbing and Heating, addressed the Board and recommended that the Board of Commissioners continue to search for options to finance school facilities in Catawba County. He said current bonds are at 4 - 4½ percent.

Chair Barnes thanked Mr. Teague for his comments and assured him that the Board's main concerns were the economy and education.

7. Appointments. None.

8. Consent agenda:

County Manager J. Thomas Lundy presented the following consent agenda items.

- a. Resolution Opposing the Passage of Senate Bill 322 Regarding Mandatory Provision of Interconnection and Provision of Potable Water Between Governmental Agencies.

Senate Bill 322, a proposed amendment to North Carolina General Statutes, Section 130A-317 and 143-215.1, is an act that will require the interconnection of public water systems or wastewater systems to regional systems. Specifically this act will allow NCDENR to require "interconnection with a municipal, county, or regional system within a county, or between or among counties if approved by the board of commissioners of each county, if necessary to promote the public health, protect the environment, or ensure compliance with drinking water rules" prior to a unit of local government being permitted to begin construction or alteration of a public water system or award a contract for construction or alteration. The proposed amendments: 1) threaten to remove control of water supplies and wastewater treatment capabilities from local governmental agencies and place the ability to mandate provision of water or wastewater treatment service and interconnection with the State of North Carolina, and 2) will impose unnecessary burdens on the local government and citizens who actually fund the construction, maintenance and operation of such utilities. The Policy and Public Works Subcommittee recommended that the Board of Commissioners adopt a resolution opposing the passage of Senate Bill 322 regarding mandatory provision of interconnection and provision of potable water between governmental agencies.

Resolution No. 2003-09
Resolution Opposing the Passage of Senate Bill 322 Regarding Mandatory Provision of
Interconnection and Provision of Potable Water Between Governmental Agencies

WHEREAS, the proposed amendments to North Carolina General Statutes, Section 130A-317 and 143-215.1 threaten to remove control of water supplies and wastewater treatment capabilities from local governmental agencies and place the ability to mandate provision of water or wastewater treatment service and interconnection with the State of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, such change will impose unnecessary burdens on the local government and citizens who actually fund the construction, maintenance and operation of such utilities; and

WHEREAS, removal of such control threatens to subject decisions which should be negotiated between local governments on relatively equal footing to political considerations which have the potential to unfairly impact those citizens who made the provision of such services possible.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of Catawba County, North Carolina, sitting in open session this 21st day of April, 2003, at a regularly scheduled meeting of the governing body of said Commission, duly called and posted in accordance with the statutes of the State of North Carolina, as follows, to-wit:

Section 1. It is the desire of the County of Catawba that municipal water or wastewater treatment system owners are able to retain control of their public facilities that have been constructed and paid for by the citizens of the municipality.

Section 2. The decision as to whether to enter into an agreement with another governmental agency, or to interconnect water or wastewater treatment systems should be left to the sound discretion of the local elected officials who are better informed of the needs of the local community.

Section 3. The Board of Commissioners of Catawba County, North Carolina, on behalf of the citizens of Catawba County, does oppose the passage of Senate Bill 322, and strongly urges the elected officials representing western North Carolina, as well as those representing other parts of the state, to actively oppose this bill and vote against the same.

Done this 21st day of April, 2003.

(SEAL)
Attest:

Board of Commissioners of Catawba County
A North Carolina Body Politic

By: /s/ Katherine W. Barnes, Chair

/s/ Thelda B. Rhoney, County Clerk

Approved as to form on behalf of Catawba County:

/s/ Jerry Hess, County Staff Attorney

b. Amendment to Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2, Section 2.118, Authority to Contract.

The Policy and Public Works Subcommittee recommended that the Board of Commissioners adopt an ordinance amending Chapter 2, Section 2-118 of the Catawba County Code of Ordinances, "Authority to Contract" by authorizing the County Manager or his designee to execute real estate leases which will be reported to the Board. Various departments within the county periodically have short-term needs for additional space. Such needs may be met by entering into real estate leases. A recent example involves the Department of Social Services needing to find a home for the Children's Advocacy Center. The City of Conover has a facility which will suffice for the purpose, and the City has reached an agreement with the Department of Social Services for the lease of that facility. Currently the County Manager, or his designee, does not have the authority under our Code to sign such a lease. This modification will allow the County Manager to transact such business in the normal course of conducting operations, without the necessity of bringing such simple matters before the Board.

Ordinance No. 2003-08

Be it hereby ordained that Chapter 2, Section 2-118 of the Catawba County Code, "Authority to Contract" is hereby amended by adding the following provisions:

§Section 2-118 Authority to Contract

The County Manager, or his designee, is authorized to execute agreements, within funds included in the budget ordinance or other actions by the board of commissioners, for the following purposes:

- (1) Form grant agreements to public and nonprofit organizations.
- (2) Leases of routine business equipment.
- (3) Consultant, professional or maintenance service agreements.
- (4) Purchase of supplies, materials or equipment where formal bids are not required by law.
- (5) Applications for, and agreements for acceptance of, grant funds from federal, state, public and nonprofit organization sources, and other funds from other government units, for services to be rendered, which have been previously approved by the Board.
- (6) Construction or repair projects.
- (7) Liability, health, life, disability, casualty, property or other insurance or performance bonds, other than similar items required by the sheriff or the register of deeds.
- (8) Administrative contracts, which may include those adopted in accordance with directives from the Board.
- (9) Real Estate Leases, which will subsequently be reported to the board of commissioners.

This 21st day of April, 2003.

/s/ Katherine W. Barnes, Chair
Catawba County Board of Commissioners

c. Resolution - Designation of Catawba County's Agent for Matters Involving Federal Disaster Assistance.

Catawba County is eligible to receive Federal and State assistance authorized under a major disaster declaration issued by President Bush. Associated with this declaration are two Hazard Mitigation Grants applied for by Catawba County Emergency Services. In order to receive and administer Hazard Mitigation Grants, it is necessary for Catawba County to authorize an agent. This agent will be responsible for managing all mitigation grants applied for and awarded to Catawba County Emergency Services. Staff recommended that the Board of Commissioners adopt a resolution naming Emergency Services Director David A. Weldon as its agent to provide all matters pertaining to disaster

assistance to the State and to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for Hazard Mitigation Grants.

**Resolution No. 2003-10
Designation of Applicant's Agent**

BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of Catawba County that David A. Weldon, Emergency Services Director is hereby authorized to execute for and in behalf of Catawba County, a public entity established under the laws of the State of North Carolina, this application and to file it in the appropriate State office for the purpose of obtaining certain Federal financial assistance under the Disaster Relief Act (Public Law 288, 93rd Congress) or otherwise available from the President Disaster Relief Fund.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Catawba County, a public entity established under the laws of the State of North Carolina, hereby authorizes its agent to provide to the State and to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for all matters pertaining to such Federal disaster assistance the assurance and agreements.

Passed and approved this 21st day of April, 2003.

/s/ Katherine W. Barnes, Chair
Catawba County Board of Commissioners

d. Realignment of Catawba Valley Boulevard.

Catawba County, the City of Hickory and Catawba Valley Community College officials, recognizing the need to preserve the integrity of the Community College campus for the potential development of classroom and educational support services building sites, have been working the past several months to find alternatives to the planned alignment of Catawba Valley Boulevard. To facilitate the process, Catawba County contracted with the Kubilins Transportation Group, Inc., to identify potential alternative roadway alignments.

The Catawba Valley Boulevard Extension was originally part of the 1986 Hickory-Newton-Conover (HNC) Thoroughfare Plan and remains an element of the 1996 Transportation Plan. It is classified as a minor thoroughfare that will parallel US 70 on the south side and will therefore provide local travelers with more east-west connectivity along the rapidly developing US 70 corridor and its environs. The entire parallel roadway is planned to extend from Robinson Road in the City of Hickory, east to US 321 in the City of Newton. The original alignment shown on the HNC Transportation Plan passes through the Catawba Valley Community College (CVCC) soccer field and proceeds in an easterly direction through CVCC property.

Existing land use along US 70 ranges from office/institutional to high intensity, "big-box" commercial. Very little residential or vacant land remains on the corridor. What does remain is likely to transition to some type of commercial or office use. For land use planning purposes, the parallel roadway design of Catawba Valley Boulevard provides a transitional boundary from the intensity of the US 70 corridor to the more rural residential land use to the south. Development on the south side of the facility has already shown that trend. Multi-family and lower intensity commercial development is located behind the Valley Hills Mall area.

With the completion of US 321, Startown Road has become a critical connector facility to US 70. Its character is therefore certain to change from a rural residential roadway to a primary major thoroughfare.

The average daily trips (ADT) on Startown Road is projected to grow to over 22,000 by the year 2020 and, from the previous study, the ADT for the Catawba Valley Boulevard Extension is projected to be between 8,000 and 10,000 vehicles per day (vpd) in 2005. This study applied an estimated 3% annual growth rate to get a projected 2020 ADT of 14,025 vpd for the Catawba Valley Boulevard Extension.

Kubilins' study revealed workable alternatives to the on-campus alignment including an alternative that parallels the south side of Startown Road for approximately one mile, then crosses Startown Road east of Camelot Drive and continues about one and one-half miles tying into St. Paul's Church Road. The CVCC Board of Trustees have endorsed this alternative by formal vote at a called meeting April 11, 2003, and the Hickory City Council adopted the joint resolution on April 15th.

The Policy and Public Works Subcommittee recommended that the Board of Commissioners adopt a joint resolution beginning the process of the realignment of Catawba Valley Boulevard by the HNC-MPO.

RESOLUTION NO. 2003-11

A Joint Resolution of the City of Hickory City Council and Catawba County Board of County Commissioners Requesting that the Hickory-Newton-Conover Urban Area Thoroughfare Plan be Amended to Realign the Section of Catawba Valley Boulevard East of Startown Road.

WHEREAS the 2001 Alignment of Catawba Valley Boulevard traverses the Catawba Valley Community College campus; and

WHEREAS Catawba Valley Community College, Catawba County and the City of Hickory agreed to consider alternative locations providing equal traffic service to the Hickory Newton Conover Metropolitan Planning Area; and

WHEREAS the Catawba County Board of County Commissioners retained the traffic engineering firm of Kubilins Transportation Group, Inc. to prepare alternative alignment studies of Catawba Valley Boulevard for consideration; and

WHEREAS Catawba County and City of Hickory agree that the 1996 Alignment will be used for transportation planning and development control purposes until an alternative alignment is duly adopted; and

WHEREAS Catawba County and the City of Hickory have reviewed these alignments and agree that Alternative Number 1 – Southwest Alignment is the preferred alternative and provides equal traffic service to the Hickory-Newton-Conover Metropolitan Planning Area; and

WHEREAS Catawba County has agreed to hold the City of Hickory harmless in regards to any additional costs associated with the new alignment including increased costs associated with right-of-way acquisition; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Hickory and Catawba County do hereby petition the Hickory-Newton-Conover Metropolitan Planning Organization and the State Department of Transportation to amend the Hickory-Newton-Conover Thoroughfare Plan to adopt Alternative 1 – Southwest Alignment as the future alignment of Catawba Valley Boulevard.

This resolution is effective upon its adoption the _____ day of _____, 2003.

CITY OF HICKORY
A North Carolina Municipal Corporation

By: /s/ G. Rudy Wright Jr., Mayor

ATTEST: /s/ Patricia W. Williams, City Clerk

Approved as to form this _____ day of _____, 2003.

/s/ Larry W. Johnson, Staff Attorney

COUNTY OF CATAWBA
A North Carolina Municipal Corporation

By: /s/ Katherine W. Barnes, Chair

ATTEST: /s/ Thelda B. Rhoney, County Clerk

Approved as to form this _____ day of _____, 2003.

/s/ Debra Bechtel, County Staff Attorney

- e. Waiver of Solid Waste Disposal Fees for Catawba County Historical Association for Murray's Mill Annual Storytelling Festival on May 2, 2003.

The Catawba County Historical Association is sponsoring a Murray's Mill Storytelling Festival to the local school systems on May 2, 2003. There will be over 2,000 students in attendance. Mr. Paul A. Beatty, Jr. requested a waiver of solid waste disposal fees for one 30 cubic yard waste container on April 15, 2003. Republic Services, Inc./Garbage Disposal will donate the cost of the container and hauling of the container to the Blackburn Landfill. Staff recommended that the Board of Commissioners waive the solid waste, tipping for the Storytelling Festival on May 2, 2003

Commissioner Lail made a motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

End Consent Agenda

9. Departmental Report:

a. Finance Department:

1. Bids #03-1008 - Oxford Fire Department, Station No. 2.

Assistant County Manager Mick Berry gave a brief PowerPoint presentation on the Oxford Fire Department project.

Oxford EMS, Fire, Rescue Base

- 2000 Strategic Plan for Emergency Services- #1 EMS Goal, Full-time base in Oxford Area
- Oxford Fire Department- Un-rated areas
- Expand presence of Claremont Rescue and strengthen partnership with Fire and EMS

Project Funding \$1,017,137

- EMS- 47% = \$478,054
- General tax revenues set aside for this purpose
- Operation date part of budget decision
- Oxford Fire- 30% = \$305,141
- USDA low interest loan to be repaid from Fire District tax revenue
- Claremont Rescue- 23% = \$233,941
- Dedicated revenues set aside for joint EMS Rescue bases

Purchasing Agent Debbie Anderson said the Catawba County Emergency Services Strategic Plan emphasized a need for an EMS Base in the growing Oxford area as well as in four other locations in the County. At the same time, Oxford Fire Department had plans to build a new sub-station to better serve the citizens in this growing area. The proposed base will be built in conjunction with the Oxford Fire Department and Claremont Rescue Squad. The new building will be jointly owned and occupied with Catawba County EMS occupying 6,067 square feet (47%); Oxford Fire Department occupying 3,880 square feet (30%); and Claremont Rescue occupying 2,927 square feet (23%).

The new facility will be located on Highway 16 North, adjacent to the Conover water tower. On November 4, 2002, the Board of Commissioners approved a 35-year lease for \$1 per year between, Oxford Fire Department, Catawba County EMS, Claremont Rescue Squad and the City of Conover.

Oxford Fire Department has been approved by USDA-Rural Development to borrow up to \$425,000 to construct and equip this new facility. Claremont Rescue Squad will fund its share of the facility from general property tax revenues which have been earmarked and set aside for several years to construct new rescue bases as they are needed. To simplify the financial administration of the project, and save Oxford Fire Department interest payments on a construction loan, staff recommended that Oxford Fire Department's fund balance and Capital Project Fund Balance be used to cover the entire cost of the construction. Once the project is completed and USDA- Rural Development loan is made against the Fire Departments portion of the facility, the Capital Project Fund and the Fire Department's fund balance will be reimbursed.

Plans and specifications were prepared by Reinhardt & Beal Architects, Inc. to construct a new 12,874 square foot facility to be occupied by Oxford Fire Department, Claremont Rescue

Squad and Catawba County EMS. A pre-bid conference was conducted on March 3, 2003, and Single-Prime and Multi-Prime Bids were received on March 19, 2003.

Three alternates were included: 1) provide a generator for the left side of the building to service EMS; 2) provide color concrete for the finish floor so the floor will not stain and discolor and will make it easier to clean; 3) provide a generator for the right side of the building for Fire/Rescue. Staff is currently investigating if there would be cost savings for one large generator that would supply both sides of the building.

The lowest Single-Prime bidder is Matthews Construction:

Single Prime	Matthews
Total Base	986,461
Alt. 1	13,150
Alt. 2	4,376
Alt. 3	13,150
Total	1,017,137

Following is the listing of the lowest Multi-Prime bids received:

Multi Prime					
	General Matthews	Plumbing Thomason	Mechanical Huffman	Electrical Caldwell	Total
Total Base	802,561	47,495	57,577	65,000	972,633
Alt. 1	--	--	350	12,200	12,550
Alt. 2	4,376	--	--	--	4,376
Alt. 3	--	--	350	12,200	12,550
Total	806,937	47,495	58,277	89,400	1,002,109

Senate Bill 914 passed into law January 1, 2002, requires County Governments to solicit minority participation in all construction projects over \$5,000. Where the bidder does not have minority involvement in the project, they are required to submit information demonstrating that they made the effort to involve minority owned business. The law also requires the County to establish a goal of minority participation in construction projects. Catawba County's goal is 5%.

Minority Outreach Report for this project is as follows: Matthews Construction - 10.6%; G.A. Thomason - 0%; Huffman Metal Works - 6.5%; Caldwell Electric - 0%. Overall project - 9%.

Plumbing Contractor G.A. Thomason intends to perform work with their own forces and did not conduct any minority outreach and the General Statutes permit this. Caldwell Electric submitted backup documentation to indicate outreach efforts were made, but no minority contractor/supplier responded to their request for quote. Excluding staff time, the County cost for minority outreach on this project is approximately \$351.

Since USDA is providing funding for the Oxford Fire Departments portion of this project, several USDA forms were included in the bid package. One of these forms was a USADA bid bond form. Several of the multi-prime contractors did not use this form, but submitted a valid bid bond. The question was raised by a multi-prime bidder if these bids could be accepted. Staff confirmed with the Institute of Government that as long as the bid bonds submitted were

no less than what was requested the bid bonds could be accepted. The USDA has reviewed the bid bonds in question and have responded in writing that they are acceptable to the Rural Development.

The Policy and Public Works Subcommittee recommended that the Board of Commissioners award the bid for the construction of Oxford Fire Station No. 2, EMS Oxford Base & Claremont Rescue Base #2 (a joint facility) to Matthews Construction, Co., Inc. in the amount of \$1,017,137.

In addition, the Policy and Public Works Subcommittee recommended that the Board of Commissioners approve the following budget transfer:

From:		
410-460100-98600-12018	Architecture- Rescue/ EMS Base	\$ 50,000
410-460100-98800-12018	Construction- Rescue/ EMS Base	\$591,003
To:		
410-460100-988000-12020	Construction- Oxford EMS/ Fire/ Rescue Base	\$641,003

Bid Tabulation for Oxford Fire Department, Station No. 2:

<u>General Single Prime</u>	<u>Base Bid</u>	<u>Total Base Bid w/ Alternates</u>
CBM International	\$1,059,000	\$1,109,000
Crescent Construction Co.	\$1,016,200	\$1,049,200
Denver Construction Co.	\$1,088,200	\$1,122,556
Elmore Construction Co.	\$1,015,550	\$1,050,335
J.K. Hogan, Inc.	\$1,021,600	\$1,072,100
Matthews Construction	\$ 986,461	\$1,017,137
Walker Construction	\$1,060,987	\$1,098,512

<u>General Multi-Prime</u>	<u>Base Bid</u>	<u>Total Base Bid w/Alternates</u>
CMB International	\$894,000	\$902,000
Carolina Construction	\$879,928	\$886,828
Crescent Construction	\$839,500	\$843,500
Denver Construction	\$913,950	\$954,816
Elmore Construction	\$840,650	\$848,435
J.K. Hogan, Inc.	\$836,000	\$844,500
Matthews Construction	\$802,561	\$806,937
Moss-Marlow Construction	\$848,870	\$853,350
Walker Construction	\$865,723	\$869,696

<u>Plumbing Multi-Prime</u>	<u>Base Bid</u>
Cajah's Mountain Plumbing	\$65,600
G.A. Thomason & Son	\$47,495
Hickory Plumbing & Heating	\$60,880
Nichols Mechanical	\$73,732
T.M. Caldwell Plumbing	\$57,631
L.T. Mechanical	\$71,200

<u>Mechanical Multi-Prime</u>	<u>Base Bid</u>	<u>Total Base Bid w/Alternates</u>
Central Heating & AC	\$61,873	\$62,783
Hickory Sheet Metal	\$58,800	\$59,800
Huffman Metal Works	\$57,577	\$58,277
L.T. Mechanical	\$63,599	\$64,599
S&S Mechanical	\$71,552	\$72,976
Triangle Contractors	\$71,400	\$72,000
Wm C. Reynolds Co.	\$58,600	\$59,660

<u>Electrical Multi-Prime</u>	<u>Base Bid</u>	<u>Total Base Bid w/Alternates</u>
Anderson Brothers Elec	\$77,670	\$114,470
Caldwell Electric	\$65,000	\$ 89,400

Lake Electric

\$73,455

\$103,055

Commissioner Lail made a motion to award the bid to the lowest single-prime bidder - Matthews Construction Company, Inc., with a total base bid of \$986,461 and bids on Alternate #1 of \$13,150; Alternate #2 of \$4,376; and Alternate #3 of \$13,150, for a total of \$1,017,137. The motion carried unanimously.

10. Attorneys' Report. None.

11. Manager's Report. None.

12. Other items of business.

a. Litter Sweep Weeks.

Chair Barnes asked Utilities and Engineering Director Barry B. Edwards to briefly remind citizens of Litter Sweep Weeks.

Mr. Edwards said Litter Sweep Weeks will be April 21, 2003, through May 5, 2003, and the Household Hazardous Waste Residential Collection will be Saturday, May 3, 2003. Trash bags can be picked up at the Utilities and Engineering Office located in the Government Center during the next two weeks. Orange bags (for general trash) and blue bags (recyclables).

13. Adjournment.

At 8:35 p.m., there being no further business to come before the Board, Commissioner Barger made a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

Katherine W. Barnes
Chair, Board of Commissioners

Thelda B. Rhoney
County Clerk